DEATH,

A

VISION:

OR, THE

Solemn Departure of Saints and Sinners,

REPRESENTED UNDER THE

SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM.

By JOHN MACGOWAN.

Heb. ii. 15. *And deliver them, who through fear of DEATH were all their life time subject to bondage.*

Rev. ii. 11. *He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second DEATH.*

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MDCCLXXI.

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DEATH,

PREFACE

VISION:

PREFACE.

THE favourable reception which *Death, a Viſion*, has met with by the more pious and thoughtful; and the frequent accounts I have had of its uſefulneſs, eſpecially to the weary and heavy laden Chriſtian, have induced me to endeavour to make it, as much as poſſible, ſtill more acceptable, and to print it in a more ſuitable form for a family book or a pocket companion, as well as greatly to enlarge upon ſeveral circumſtances related in it.

THE ſubject is of the higheſt importance; Death caſts the dye, and unalterably fixes, forever fixes our exiſtence, either in a ſtate of the pureſt holineſs and conſummate felicity, or in the blackeſt horror, and moſt aggravated torments, in the howling regions of infamy and deſpair. It is of univerſal concern: all are equally intereſted in it; for "*all muſt die.*" This point admits of no controverſy; nor can

any man appeal from the awful deciſion. We may in other things, perhaps allowably differ; but here our judgment muſt be unanimous, whilſt we viſit the tombs of our anceſtors, and daily tread upon duſt once inhabited by immortal ſpirits. *Your fathers, where are they? The prophets, do they live for ever?* Burying places diſcover graves of every dimenſion, from the infant of a ſpan to the ſwain of talleſt ſtature. The hoary head, though frequently unnoticed, proclaims aloud the ſwift approach of Death to venerable age, ripening for the grave by a ſeries of bodily infirmities. The young in years; the bloom of youth, and ſtrength of manhood, in this unequal war can make no greater reſiſtance than tottering weakneſs. Almoſt every day produceth freſh teſtimony that youth is by no means an inſurance from Death; nor robuſt and brawny limbs a ſecurity from the grave. The greateſt monarch comes down here to a perfect equality with the baſeſt beggar; and the moſt delicate epicurean ranks only with the menial drudge. Neither robes of the fineſt lawn, nor crowns of the pureſt gold, have power to exempt their wearers from the pains and horrors of a gloomy Death-bed, and its inevitable conſequences. How awful

this conſideration "*God hath appointed that all men once ſhall die*"? Muſt it not affect the mind to think of entering into an unknown ſtate of exiſtence? A ſtate, of which nothing can in this life be learned but from the word of revelation. And is it not ſtill more awful to ſee, that notwithſtanding the abſolute certainty, and the vaſt importance of Death, that the far greater part of mankind pay little or no regard to its dread ſolemnity? Men in general will be more curious and exact in their enquiries after, even the moſt trifling commodity they purchaſe, than about the moſt ſuitable preparation for Death. If a tradeſman is about purchaſing any valuable article, how diligent is he to guard againſt impoſition? If a gentleman purchaſe an eſtate, how inquiſitive is he after its real value, and with what accuracy does he examine the validity of his title: notwithſtanding he is to hold it as it were, only by the hour, or rather by the moment.

STRANGE it is, but it is true as ſtrange, that the bulk of mankind will take nothing upon truſt, except their everlaſting concerns. O reader if thou art one of this thoughtleſs herd, allow me to tell

thee, that thou haſt a terrible death bed, at leaſt a terrible death before thee, and which will overtake thee and will not ſpare thee one moment, becauſe of thine unpreparedneſs. No; if thou remaineſt thoughtleſs, thou remaineſt alſo without excuſe; thou haſt had, thou ſtill haſt monitors enow. The paſſing bell, whoſe doleful ſound daily ſalutes thine ear calls thee to remember thy mortality; every newſpaper that thou readeſt by the accounts of Death in it, bids thee look forward to another world; yea every pain, every ſymptom of diſeaſe ſummonſeth thee to prepare for thy long home. Let no man therefore ſay, "he had no warning of his mortality," ſeeing almoſt every thing in nature, if duly attended to, proclaims it to thee. Yet man, thoughtleſs man, goes on under a vain ſhew, and ſecurely purſues earthly objects with as much aſſiduity as if Death had in reality no exiſtence; and if there was not an awful hereafter conſequent upon diſſolution.

Give me leave to deal plainly with thee for once, my reader, for God thy judge, will one day, and that perhaps very ſoon be plain, juſtly and ſtrictly exact

exact with thee, and with every one; will call thee to a ſevere account for the thoughtleſſneſs of thy ways, yea and viſit upon thee, the ſad effects of thine own inconſideration. Tremendous muſt that audit be which is unthought of, and for which thou art unprovided; like that man without the wedding garment, the ſinner ſhall remain ſpeechleſs.

Thou preſſeſt hard after the periſhing riches of this world, ſometimes ſucceſsfully, but frequently diſappointed. And what if thou couldeſt amaſs the wealth of the whole nation to thyſelf, ſo that all thy mites ſhould increaſe to talents, alas! what would this profit if thy ſoul is yet a ſtranger to that religion which is the only preparative for an happy diſſolution? A bed of ſtate will not deter the approach of rude and uncivil diſeaſe, nor will embroidered curtains repel the ſhaft of Death; the ſilver canopy over thy face will not inſpire thee with one ray of hope to preſerve thee from drooping on the proſpect of loſing thine all. Couldſt thou leave as many millions as thou doſt pounds to ſurviving heirs or to charitable uſes, this would not in the leaſt open upon thy heart the pleaſing proſpect of

divine felicity, nor bribe the fangs of hell from ſeizing thy deſpairing ſpirit, would not even purchaſe thee a more tolerable ſtation in the manſions of the damned, or one moments reſpite from thine unutterable woe. Vain and inſignificant wealth, can only comfort in health and proſperity, but boaſteth not the power of relieving when in the greateſt neceſſity. Yet how many damn themſelves by preferring thee to Jeſus and his ſalvation? O God, open the eyes of blind and inconſiderate man, that he may be wiſe to conſider his latter end.

Art thou a man of pleaſure, and is thine heart in public places of reſort? How unworthy then the name of man? How much more excellent are the brutal ranks, which ſo faithfully anſwer the ſeveral ends of their exiſtence? The very beaſts that draw thee to routs and aſſemblies, and ſerve to promote thine unmanly diſſipation, will bring in their ſeveral accuſations, and all thine enjoyments will be ſwift witneſſes againſt thee. Go on in thy life of feſtivity, let every day be a renewed carnival, and every returning evening produce ſome new, ſome more pleaſing revel than the former; ſhut

out from thine impious heart all thoughts of God, of religion, and holiness; yet know whoever thou art, that thou shalt die, and God will bring thee to an account for every moment of time he has allotted thee, and every mercy he has conferred upon thee. If thou livest without God in time, thou shalt also die without him, and be banished from him to eternity.

When disease shall seize thee, and Death presents his envenomed arrow at thy heart, order thou thy couch to be carried to Vauxhall, Corneilly's, or some other haunt of pleasure, and try if thou canst die with more composure amongst the shouts of madness, and the bursts of foolish laughter. Yea, shroud thee in a mask and thou shalt see, that Death commissioned shall not miss his aim, but amongst the giddy crowd will select his destined victim, and as soon dispatch thee as the Haymarket or Covent-Garden as if secluded in the lonely desart. Shake off all restraints of decorum, cast the admonitions of reason behind thee, cease from reflection, and become the perfect brute, yet shalt thou find that Death will present objects to thee which shall demand

thy attention, and bring thee to thyſelf again; for thou canſt not fly from his ſtrict reſearches.

But what ſhall we do ſeeing Death is inevitable? Do! Shake off the ſenſual brute, and return to the exerciſe of reaſon. Remember that ye are endued with intellects capable of reflection; that although, ye ſhould live brutal lives, ye ſhall not have the privilege of dying like them, but muſt make your appearance before the eternal God, undergo the ſcrutiny of infinite holineſs, and be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil. If thou never bowedſt thy knee to the God that made thee, do it now, and beg of him to teach thee to act becoming a rational being, accountable to thy Maker for all thy procedure. Seek his will in the volume of Revelation, ſo ſhalt thou be taught that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord, and that there is no holineſs but what ariſeth from a being born again. Therefore ye muſt be born again, in order to die happy and live for ever bleſſed. Let whoever pleaſes laugh at the propoſition, their impious ſneers will yield

to thee no manner of excuſe, when God ſhall demand thy ſpirit. I therefore take my leave of the thoughtleſs reader by leaving this *memento* with him, "*Remember, O man, that thou muſt and ſhalt die!*"

SHALL I now beg leave leave to addreſs you whom God has made ſenſible of the neceſſity of a Saviour, and of the awful importance of an ever-during exiſtence. Great are your privileges, and great your obligations. From Death ye have nothing to fear; come when it will, it muſt come to you in a friendly manner; for it ſhall go well with them that fear the Lord. *Mark*, take particular notice of that man, whoſe ways are perfect, whoſe heart is ſincere, and earneſtly thirſts after, and ſtrives to attain that pleaſing conformity to the divine will from which our firſt father fell by tranſgreſſion; *behold the upright*, who is the ſame in his family or cloſet, that you ſee him in the church aſſembly. *The end*, the Death and Death-bed of that man, *is peace*, an holy ſerenity and calm compoſure, which neither earth nor hell can diſturb. This peace which accompanies the latter end of the Chriſtian, is the

peace

peace of God, by him beſtowed and by him maintained, and centers in the enjoyment of his ſacred preſence, and is ſuch a peace as never yet filled the boſom of an unconverted ſinner, and therefore abſolutely beyond the comprehenſion of unaſſiſted reaſon. Life may be gloomy whilſt in the tabernacle. The way may be rugged and the path uneven; ſo that the weary pilgrim may come halting to his end; but that ſhall crown the work, and the peaceful end ſhall eradicate every ſenſation of former pain, ſo that your troubles ſhall be remembred only as waters that have paſſed away; and all before you will be pleaſing and delightful. A few days of adverſity will give place to an eternity of pleaſure; an eternity of undecaying comfort being for ever behind and ſtill to be enjoyed. In all your afflictions which an all wiſe God ſees meet to exerciſe you with, it will be for your conſolation to bear their promiſed end in view. Even in this life they ſhall bring forth in you the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, whilſt they are working out for you, according to the beautiful language of inſpiration "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

What

WHAT a beautiful climax; what an aſcent of bleſſing is here, ſpringing from a ſource ſo unpromiſing? that afflictions which burden us whilſt in this tabernacle ſhould be called light may to inexperience, appear ſomething ſtrange; yet light they are in compariſon of the weight of judgment due unto ſins demerit; light in compariſon of the unſpeakable ſorrows actually ſuſtained by our adorable Lord and Saviour; and light in compariſon of that vaſt weight of glory, which God, our almighty Father, takes occaſion by them to work out in our behalf. Nor is it leſs ſtrange to hear our affliction, which frequently attend us from the cradle to the tomb repreſented but as for a moment: Yet when compared with that perpetual felicity ſo faſt approaching, life, though drawn out to the days of Methuſelah, ſinks into nothing. Yet even this light affliction which is but for a moment, ſhall work for us a far—more—exceeding —and eternal weight of glory. Here is a *weight* of glory inſtead of light afflictions —a *great* weight of glory—a *greater* weight of glory—a *far* greater weight of glory; far greater than we can aſk or think of, or in any ways deſerve—a *far more greater* weight of glory, than could ever have been

attained

attained by the most perfect legal obedience—a far *more exceeding greater* weight of glory—and to crown all—a far more exceeding greater *eternal* weight of glory. To set forth the issue of the saints afflictions, this elegant apostle has exhausted the power of language. Further he could not go; eternity must discover the rest. Let patience then have its perfect work, and let contentment be the object of your pursuit; it is no matter what bitter ingredients are mingled in your cup; it is the prescription of infinite wisdom and therefore must be salutary.

But Death is awful; you know not how to bear the thoughts of dying. Why should the weary have any objection to laying him down to rest; or the hungry beggar to entering into the banquetting house. Death is indeed a dark, and gloomy porch, but it is the gate of thy Father's house; and will not the loving, the longing child venture through a few moments gloom in order to get at the dear embrace of a father so loving and compassionate. Ye must pass the gate, in order to enter the mansion that so long has waited your arrival; and your Lord, your blessed friend and fore-

forerunner hath taken care to remove out of the way every thing noxious and finally hurtful; ſhall vouchſafe his amiable and lovely preſence in the mount of ſtraits and valley of thy fears; and ſhall make thy Death perfectly ſafe and ſalutary, perhaps even deſirable and eaſy. To the ſaint of God, for the moſt part the bitterneſs of Death is paſt before Death itſelf arrives, ſo that upon its arrival he does not find it to be that terrible, and tremendous thing to die which he once apprehended. O my God, vouchſafe me thy ſenſible preſence in my laſt hours, then ſhall I eſteem my Death an ineſtimable benefit, and my laſt hours the moſt precious of my temporal life, and even with my dying breath I will magnify the precious name of Jeſus my beloved.

Once more, let me recommend it to you, as you wiſh to live honourably and to die in comfort, to cultivate theſe tempers and principles that are likely to have your approbation on a Death-bed. I am either greatly miſtaken in reſpect to the nature of Chriſtianity, or ſome people of eminent rank in the church of Chriſt muſt undergo a very great revolution in the temper and diſpo-

poſition

ſition of their mind, before they are likely to have a comfortable Death: an angry, a revengeful, an implacable temper very ill agrees with the genius of the goſpel diſpenſation, and with our character as followers of the meek and lowly Jeſus, who, with his dying breath cried out "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Let this ever be remembred, that it is not a well informed head, and clear knowledge of goſpel truth which can either diffuſe peace through the heart, or imprint the image of Jeſus upon the ſoul, if a ſanctified heart, if heavenly tempers and diſpoſitions of mind are wanting. The one may indeed give you the name, but it is the other that gives you the nature of a Chriſtian. It has been a melancholly obſervation, in which I am afraid there is but too much juſtice, that ſome profeſſors moſt eminent for goſpel knowledge, are moſt remarkably deficient in regard to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and think indeed that they ought to behave ill to thoſe who are leſs clear in their doctrinal ſentiments, or have the unhappineſs to differ from them in ſome favourite article. But what an unfavourable idea is this likely to give infidels of, even the goſpel itſelf, as they are glad

glad to lay hold of every blemiſh in the Chriſtian character, and to charge the bleſſed goſpel with the defects of its abettors. I freely confeſs, that if I had not been favoured with ſome acquaintance with the nature, power, and ſpirit of the goſpel myſelf, what I have ſeen of the ſpirit and conduct of profeſſors, muſt unavoidably have fixed on my heart an indelible diſguſt againſt revealed religion in general: therefore it is eaſy to account for the unhappy increaſe of Deiſts and Free-thinkers, ſo obſervable in Britain at this period. There is ſuch a thing as ſaying without doing; as defending the truths of the goſpel in word, and denying them in the ſpirit of our whole conduct: ought not then every lover of goſpel truth to look well to his ſpirit and converſation, that he does not effectually injure that bleſſed truth which he deſires to promote, and which alone can yield him peace, and compoſure in his dying moments.

THERE is no way ſo likely to ſoften the tempers, and regulate the paſſions of man, as to cultivate an acquaintance with Death-bed ſolemnities, and ſtrive to keep an approaching eternity in view. It is only in

proportion to this, that we can either think or act becoming the Chriſtian. This habit of mind, converſant with eternity has many peculiar advantages connected with it, and is of the greateſt utility in the religious life: ſuch as making afflictions which otherwiſe would ſeem long and ſevere, to appear what they really are but light and momentary; naturally leads us into ſuch an acquaintance with our own perſonal weakneſs, that we can bear with the weakneſſes of others, and exerciſe forbearance even to our greateſt enemies; makes the honour of religion, the peace and tranquility of the church, and the ſpread of the Redeemer's glory the firſt objects of our purſuit; in compariſon of which all other concerns will ſeem but light and trivial. Beſides that familiar acquaintance with it which in the iſſue ſhall make Death itſelf deſireable and eaſy; which is rarely the caſe with thoſe who are but little given to bear in mind the ſolemnities of their diſſolution. The pilgrim cannot forget his native country, nor the exile the houſe of his fathers; how then can it be that the Chriſtian under the exerciſe of grace ſhall forget the land of his inheritance?

The

THE following little tract was written within the immediate views of Death, and when eternity made very awful impreſſions on the heart of the author. The mode of it was choſen with a view to make it more entertaining, whilſt it conveyed the neceſſary inſtruction to the mind. The ſubſtance of it notwithſtanding is taken from facts, which have fallen under his own obſervation, and it is hoped that through the divine bleſſing the truths conveyed in it, will produce their evidence in the believing heart. I truſt I can ſay that I am thankful for the accounts I have had of its uſefulneſs, and bleſs God that any feeble attempt of mine ſhould be owned to his peoples edification. I have taken freſh pains in preparing this third edition for the preſs, and am perſuaded that it comes now abroad under greater advantages than in former editions. What alterations I have made, are ſuch as ſeemed to me calculated to promote its uſefulneſs, and make it more agreeable to the ſerious reader. I have only to add, that I beg my reader to impute the plainneſs of ſpeech I have uſed in the preface, to a warm deſire, to ſee the true ſpirit of religion prevail amongſt profeſſors, and to be uſeful to the ſouls of my fellow ſinners.

Now

Now that the holy Ghoſt may attend the reading of *Death, a Viſion*, with his ſpecial influence; that it may anſwer the end for which it is now again ſent into the world is, and I truſt ſhall be the author's prayer. Amen.

DEATH,

DEATH:

A

VISION.

PART I.

IT was about twelve months ago that my mind, as is but too frequent with me, void of ſtability, rambled from one theme to another, and, for a conſiderable time, continued its vagary to that degree, that I found myſelf utterly incapable of fixing my attention on any ſubject that preſented itſelf, however intereſting and important it might ſeem. At laſt an awful

ſubject, DEATH —— all conquering DEATH! preſented itſelf to me, and that not in a very deſirable manner, but in all the deformities of an implacable enemy to nature. This unwelcome, though important viſitant, ingroſſed my attention in ſuch a manner, that for a fortnight's ſpace I maintained an almoſt conſtant intercourſe with that awful production of Sin; throughout the whole length of the day, whether I was in the cloſet, at the table, or taking a turn on the flowery banks of Severn, my friendly neighbour, I was always employed in viewing the features of his awful countenance; marking, as well as I could, the proportion of his parts and duly obſerving his formidable retinue. It was thus I employed myſelf, whilſt the chearful ſun illumined our horizon, and nature rejoiced in his genial rays: nor was I leſs intent on the awful ſubject, when ſilent night ſpread her ſable curtains over the kingdom, and invited the labourer to refreſhing reſt: for either my eyes reſiſted the leaden influence of ſleep, or the viſiting ſlumber brought the thoughts of DEATH along with it. One particular inſtance of my nocturnal converſation

with

with that univerſal pillager, I eſteem not unworthy of a public hearing, therefore ſhall do myſelf the pleaſure of relating it.

It happened, one night, after I had been deeply ruminating through the day, on that awful ſubject, that when I was in bed I could not compoſe myſelf for ſeveral hours to reſt, but numbered the clock from eleven till two, ſo deep was the impreſſion which the exerciſe of the day had left upon my mind. Then it was that I began to feel the power of an alarmed imagination; for in one ſtrain of thought I fancied I beheld the dreaded monſter approaching me with his opened commiſſion in one hand, and a reſiſtleſs dart in the other, with which he intended piercing my reluctant heart, and the hated grave cloſe at his heels, yawning with eager deſire for a prey. The man who knows the extent of his own fortitude, and the proweſs of nature's arm, will not brand me with cowardice, though I tell him, that ſuch a ſtriking diſcovery made my timorous nature ſhrink, and turn its back on the inflexible enemy:

Hard work, alas! to join the fray with death,
Unleſs defended from his baleful ſting.

At another time I fancied, I ſaw the tyrant in the form of a dragon, wreathing his tremendous bulk beneath the feet of a glorious perſonage, who bore five ever flowing wounds, which he received on the day, that haughty DEATH imagined the heavenly country was added to his earthly dominions. Indeed well might the inſatiable tyrant conceive ſuch a preſumptuous thought, ſeeing, ſtrange as it may ſeem, the Lord, the fountain of life himſelf, had fallen into his hands, nor did the regardleſs monſter pay the leaſt deference to his immaculate perſon. But well for man it was, that as the Saviour fell, he ſeized the king of terrors in his moſt hideous form, and wrenched from him the fatal ſting, the ſad repoſitory of all his ſtrength, and diſabled him of the leaſt hurtfulneſs to the choſen race. This holy Conqueror, for reaſons known to himſelf, and profitable to us, was pleaſed to viſit the dwellings of the dead, and, for a ſeaſon, ſubmitted himſelf to the arreſt of DEATH. But the third bleſt morning come, he ſhook the duſt

duſt from him, burſt the barriers of the tomb, forſook the confines of DEATH, and in holy triumph held forth the poiſonous ſting, and ſaid, *I have overcome death, and him that had the power of death.* When I was indulged with this mental viſion, I thought that emboldened nature collected its force and advanced to gaze on the expiring monſter. O! thought I, if I could always view that cruel adverſary, in his ſtingleſs condition, ſprawling at the feet of his wondrous conqueror, I could meet him with as little fear, as a child would ſport himſelf with a harmleſs lamb. But alas! I often look forward with fear, and ſometimes with horror to that momentous period that ſhall fix, forever fix my ſtate of exiſtence, in an unalterable ſtation of a *weal* or *woe.* To be incapable of diſcerning any thing alluring in life, any thing attractive in this world, and yet to dread a departure from it; to have no ſatisfactory diſcovery made of that world of ſpirits where Immanuel reigns in triumph, nor of the ſafety of the paſſage from earth to heaven, how diſmal the caſe! How gloomy! How threatning the proſpect! As I was meditating on theſe awful ſub-

jects, gentle ſlumber ſeized me with its lulling charms, and ſoon wafted me into the arms of downy ſleep, where I lay the reſt of the night inactive in body, DEATH having imprinted his image upon me.

IN the mean while, the more vigilant mind, after her uſual manner, rambled abroad through unmeaſured ſpace. Mounted on agil fancy, ſhe ſoon explored the vaſt meridian from pole to pole; then changing her courſe, ſhe winged her flight acroſs the countries, from the eaſtern depth to the occidental ſhore, and in its rapid journey my fruitful fancy lined out a numerous train of viſionary objects; ſo that now, I had work enough cut out for the reſidue of the night, in turning over theſe phantoms of the mind.

I DREAMED, that in one place I beheld the moſt beautiful garden that ever I had ſeen, repreſented by any type or print whatſoever, and which I preſume could be equalled only by Eden in its original beauty. In the midſt of this delightful garden aroſe a fountain, not of water, but of a ſlimy ſubſtance, bearing ſomething of

of the resemblance of boiling pitch. I thought that the fountain flowed apace, and sent forth innumerable streams to every quarter of the globe, in such plenty, that it diffused itself abroad through every corner of the land, insomuch that every inhabitant was less or more bedaubed with the polluting matter. Gentlemen in scarlet and lace, ladies adorned with silver and gold brocades, I beheld smeared with the filth of the fountain: from the high possessor of the royal chair, down to the despised Lazar, all were polluted, though many of them perceived not the stain. Many of those streams joining in one, composed a river of a prodigious force, which passed through a spacious plain, and multitudes of people of both sexes, high and low, rich and poor, of all denominations and persuasions, young and old, I saw rolling in the polluted stream. Some swimming, others wading; some faster, others slower down the noisome channel; some sipping, others lapping the foam of the unnatural billows, but all going along with the stream, which I perceived disembogued itself on the other side of this world, in a lake which burneth with fire

and brimſtone, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched.

In another place I ſaw an infinite number of people, old and young, rich and poor, ſome decked with ornamental embroideries, rich brocades, delightful damaſks, &c. others *hardly* covered with deforming rags; ſome with their coaches, landaus, &c. attended with a numerous retinue; ſome on horſeback following a pack of hounds, others running on foot, but all purſuing the ſame chace. This promiſcuous body, as I thought, formed itſelf into a circle of a wide diameter, around the mouth of a dreadful volcano. Every member of the mixed multitude held an uninterrupted purſuit around the ring. Thoſe who rode in coaches, chariots, and landaus went foremoſt in the mad proceſſion; thoſe who ſtrode the martial horſe were next unto them; and the poorer ſort, who tramped on foot, hied after as faſt as they could. When I beheld the ardour of the croud, I could not help admiring what valuable prize it might be, which prompted them to run with ſuch alacrity, and that even within the

views

views of danger; till at length I eſpied what are commonly called the pleaſures of the fleſh, transformed into immaterial butterflies, a cloud of which cut their uneven flight around the above-named circle, and danced as *wantons* within a very ſmall diſtance of the firſt rank of the purſuers; and many of them, as ſtragling flies, mixed themſelves with the various ranks of the fag-end of the multitude; and all the croud, as I thought, were intent on catching the giddy flies, ever hoping and ever diſappointed.

Sometimes the purſuers got within arms-length of the leading flies, then they ſnatched with eager graſp, nothing doubting but the long-ſought prize at laſt was won. But, O the power of deceit! as ſoon as the enthuſiaſt opened his hand, he ſaw with grief that the fly had eluded his *diligence*, however often it *fluttered* near him. Thus diſappointed, they doubled their efforts, and increaſed their ſpeed, in order to accompliſh the deſired end; but this, notwithſtanding all their endeavours I perceived to be impracticable; for although the butterflies always kept in view,

ſo ſubtle were they, they never could be caught; and yet ſo alluring was their mazy dance, that the mad purſuers, prompted with hope of attaining, could not be prevailed with to deſert the chace, although at every turn one or more of the company fell into the pit, from whence there is no redemption. But as the volcano in the center received thoſe whoſe race was run, others from the outſide joined the ranks, and filled up the place of the perſons loſt. And thus it was at every turn, for they were always drawing nearer and nearer to the pit, and thus they continued as long as I beheld them.

In a third place, I ſaw in a ſpacious field, a prodigious number of people, moſtly old, or middle-aged, extremely buſy, and working upon their hands and knees, for whom I was touched with the tendereſt emotions of pity, looking upon them to be in a ſtate of the moſt abject ſlavery, but could not for a time comprehend the nature of their ſervitude, being altogether unacquainted with ſo ſtrange a ſort of toil. Their actions ſeemed much to reſemble thoſe of a mole, for their hands and feet,

and

and every other organ, were closely employed, but their *heads*, their *plodding heads*, were principally concerned in the work; and what before I took to be such servile drudgery, I soon learned to be their chief, if not their only pleasure. O! with what alacrity did they rout with their heads, mole-like, in the earth, in quest of somewhat, but what it was I could not at first comprehend, till after lending a close attention for some time to their motions, I perceived them to pick up certain particles of yellow dust, with somewhat of a brilliant gloss; which, as soon as found, they kissed and hid in a cavern very near the heart. Many of those diligent gentry I saw fall prostrate before the refulgent heap, and thus address it; "GOLD! adorable gold! GOLD, thou blessed effect of *mine own industry*, be thou ever preserved safe in my possession, and I desire no other good, no other blessing but thee. Increase, O increase upon me! for thou answerest all things, and I can be happy only in the possession of thee. Avaunt every pilfering rogue; ye poor and needy keep for ever at a distance from my dwelling, and reap the reward of your slothfulness. And,

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O my GOLD! continue to reſt in theſe bleſſed coffers, bleſſed only by thy preſence. Inſtead of roving; ever here take up thy abode, for I vow, that my morning homage, and evening adoration, ſhall be paid to none but thee." I ſaw, as I thought, ſome of them rout a whole ſummer's day, and prove very unſucceſsful, finding few or none of thoſe ſhining particles of duſt; others were more ſucceſsful, and every time they dived into the earth, brought forth ſome leſs, others more of the fulgent *clay*, and diſpoſed of it ſo as to endue it with ſuch a generative quality, as annually to beget and bring forth more of its own ſpecies. Others I ſaw who routed long and ſore, but no increaſe enſuing, they fell into a viſible diſcontent, and curſed the partial earth, which beſtowed her favours on others, as they thought, leſs worthy than themſelves. Some there were who toiled long, and were very ſucceſsful in the *routing* way, having heaped much of that precious duſt together; but to their laſting mortification, ſome cunning neighbour, by a moſt maſterly artifice, got beyond and robbed them of the adored metal. Others diligently routed both night and

day in the earth, and with the utmoſt care diſpoſed of their increaſe in ſome place of approved ſafety; but in deſpite of all their induſtry and care, they were mortified to the laſt degree, when they perceived their own children, who played about their knees, and whom they loved above all things, *newt* to their gold, *had been* more dextrous in ſcattering the heaps abroad, than they themſelves in collecting them. Likewiſe ſome were there, who by long and inceſſant fatigue, had the pleaſure of gathering much of this yellow duſt together, but ere they were aware, whilſt ſtanding in an adoring poſture before it, ſuddenly ſunk into the earth, and I ſaw them no more; but where they went to take up their abode, I do not at preſent determine; only this I ſaw, their memory was ſoon forgotten, and the next heir reaped the fruit of their induſtry. Others there were who with indefatigable diligence had got *almoſt enough* of this brilliant duſt, but ere the fool conſidered that it was periſhable, he had the unſpeakable grief of ſeeing it all ſwept away by ſome ſhower, or burned up by ſome flaſh of lightning, ſent on purpoſe by the angry heavens; on-

which

which diſaſter ſome of them became quite diſconſolate, and went mourning even to the grave. Others, of more heroic fortitude, having ſuſtained loſs, immediately clapped down on their hands and knees, and went to work with their head in the earth, and routed with double diligence, reſolving by all means, juſt or unjuſt, to repair their ruined heaps. Having had a full view of this routing brotherhood, I could not forbear thinking that a people ſo very near reſembling the *mole* in its diſpoſitions and actions, might, with a good deal of propriety, be named HUMAN MOLES.

BUT tired with beholding the paultry actions of this groveling ſociety, I thought I bent my courſe to another domain, where I ſaw a lofty tower, the top of which tranſcended the hoary clouds, for aught I know, as far as they are higher than the earth, perhaps many times as far. The tower was built in a pyramidical form, divided into great variety of ſtories, with a kind of winding way on the outſide, which led from one ſtory to another; and you muſt think that a very dangerous way

it

it ſeemed, ſeeing it had no battlements to guard its aſcendants. On every ſtory were built certain pinnacles, or ſmall towers, beautifully adorned with garlands of flowers, plumes of feathers, titles of ſtate, names of honour, &c. and on the top of the tower was a figure of clay, overlaid with the appearance of gold. This image was formed in the ſhape of a woman, beautiful at firſt ſight, but whoſe features appeared groſſer the longer you looked at her. She ſeemed to be crowned with gold, adorned with ſparkling diamonds, and a zone ſtudded with precious ſtones begirt her ſwelling loins; over her head was raiſed an azure canopy, embroidered with the fineſt gold. In one hand ſhe held titles and names, in the other a regal ſceptre, and in an inviting poſture, ſhe ſtood on a marble pedeſtal, with this alluring motto wrote on her eſcutcheon; *The valiant hero who hath courage enough to climb up to me, ſhall enjoy me.* O what buſtle was here amongſt people of all ranks, ſtriving who ſhould ſooneſt aſcend the ſides of the tower; each ſtriving to poſſeſs himſelf of ſome place of eminence, without conſidering the dangers to which they were

expoſed

expoſed by their aſpiration! Often have I ſeen the contention of the turf, but never did I ſee ſuch jockeying as was here; ſcarcely any thing but joſtling and croſſing the way was to be ſeen amongſt them. When one was aſcended a few ſteps above the vulgar level, and fancied himſelf ſecure of a place of eminence, another prompted thereto by envy, or ſome other principle equally vicious, came up to him, tripped up his heels, and precipitated him into the mote which ſurrounded the tower: for it ought to be obſerved, that this tower was ſurrounded by a horrible puddle, into which many of thoſe who ſought to aſcend, were plunged with violence before they knew themſelves to be in danger, either by the jockeying of their opponents, or even when ſeated upon the long-deſired pinnacle, by ſome eddy guſt burſting from the boſom of the tower, and precipitating them lower than they had been before. However, ſome few there were, who with indefatigable diligence attained almoſt the top of the tower, and on the ſpiral point of the pinnacles they ſwaggered with waving arms, and in a contemptuous manner looked on the gazing croud who ſtood below,

below, eager beyond meaſure to obtain a ſmile of their lordſhips: herein however I thought the croud was greatly diſappointed; for no ſooner were any of theſe gentry put in poſſeſſion of a pinnacle, but inſtantly they drank of the obliviating waters of Lethe, and totally forgot the men upon whoſe ſhoulders they climbed to thoſe ſeats of eminence. Nevertheleſs, ſo deeply infatuated were thoſe who ſtood below, that they not only worſhipped the grandeur which they themſelves had put upon them, but ſtretched their expectation beyond imagination, of receiving ſome convincing proof of their gratitude. But former depreſſions utterly forgot, the worthy gentlemen dwelt in their ſecure pomp, till, in an unhappy hour, a ruffling blaſt burſt ſwiftly upon them, and furiouſly whirled them from their ſeats of honour.

Some two or three aſcended even to the marble pedeſtal, where they ſat adorned with plumes of feathers, but could hardly be ſeen of the populace below. One thing concerning them I could not but think remarkable; ſometimes they appeared like a lamb, then like a lion or a bear, and

and if at any time the wind beat high upon them, they transformed themſelves into a willow, and bended beneath the blaſt; otherwiſe into a ſtream, and thus they eluded the iron hand of danger; and when the ſtorm was over, they appeared like themſelves again; and the haughty madam looked down with a ſmile upon them.

But of all the multitude there was only one who ſat immediately at her feet in a royal chair; upon whoſe head ſhe reſted her hand and owned him her darling ſon. This favourite was a blooming majeſtic youth, in whoſe countenance was to be ſeen wiſdom and magnanimity written in legible characters; and with deportment altogether different from thoſe who ſat near him, he looked down with an air of affection upon all the ranks below him.

But ſtrange as it may ſeem, this worthy perſonage, notwithſtanding his merit and elevated ſtation, did not appear to be the moſt happy man in the world; for it was not difficult to ſee anxious cares, and perplexing fears, crawling as ſo many ſnakes around the ſeat of majeſty. I thought then, that

ſurely

ſurely the higher a man is in ſtation, he is the more emphatically wretched, unleſs he can hug the ſervile chain like the mutable ſons of Proteus, or has learned to live above the caprice of fortune. I thought in my dream, that by what means ſoever any pinnacle threw its rider, or however dirty his fall might be, that no ſooner was the place proclaimed empty, than numbers ſtrove who ſhould firſt vault into it. Here I ſaw a curate aiming at a vicarage, a vicar at a biſhopric, and a biſhop ſtriving for an archiepiſcopal ſee. Here I ſaw a valet aſpiring to the fine gentleman, a baronet aiming at an earldom, and a country ſquire coveting the direction of the nation. Here I alſo ſaw a private centinel aiming at a halberd, a halberdeer at a captain's place, a captain earneſtly ſuing for a regiment, and *Prude*, my lady's woman, affecting the name of *Madam*.—For my own part, when I ſaw the follies of mankind, I could not help wiſhing that they were again bleſſed with the right uſe of their reaſon.

At laſt, more ſtayed, I found myſelf in the middle of a ſpacious field, decorated with

with all the variety of nature, in bloom; the freſheſt-verdancy, was the velvet like ground work, embroidered with a richer variety of perfect colours than ever the delicate pencil of Apelles left on the ſtained canvas. I walked along admiring its beauties, raviſhed with the fragrancy of the full-blown flowers, which as oriental gems richly decorated the enamelled plain. Here I beheld the glory of the divine Creator, ſparkling in every verdant pile which decked the ſpreading lawn, in ſuch a manner, that ſeeing could not ſatisfy the eye. Nor was my raviſhed ear leſs delighted with the tuneful voice of the early lark, as aſcending ſhe ſung morning anthems to her almighty preſerver. Like maſters of muſic equally fired with a ſenſe of gratitude, the blackbird and thruſh, emulous of ſong, poured their flowing harmony abroad through the vault of ether, as if ſcorning to be outdone in praiſe to their common parent. Pleaſed to ſee the ſpangled field join in concert with the feathered ſongſters, who ſent forth their chirping melody from the flowery hedges; the one chearfully ſinging, the other ſweetly ſmiling, the great Creator's praiſe; "O man, ſaid

I,

I, Lord of this lower creation, what bleſſings doſt thou enjoy beyond the moſt extenſive privileges of all thy neighbours, the inhabitants of air, earth, and water! Conſcience, reaſon, and underſtanding, an erect poſture of body, ſole dominion over all the numberleſs ranks of creatures, animate and inanimate, which poſſeſs this earthly globe; they are all thine by divine donation, they all were made for thee: ſuch are thine invalued privileges, joined with an ever-during exiſtence, and a capacity fitted for the enjoyment of an INFINITE GOOD?"

"THESE are bleſſings peculiar to the ſtate of favoured man, and for which only depraved man is capable of being unthankful. But oh! let humanity bluſh at the awful conſideration; notwithſtanding all our enjoyments, we, only we men, are idle, when univerſal nature joins in general concert to ſpeak the great Creator's praiſe. Ingrateful man! ſhall the ſun, the moon and ſtars, with all the hoſts of heaven, unceaſing move in general concord, and harmoniouſly ſhew forth the praiſes of God? Muſt the fowls of the air,

air, the beasts of the field, and all the inhabitants of the waters, be concerned in the enhancement of his manifest glories, and thou, above all others most beloved, and most indulged, alone remain dumb in the general concert; worse than dumb, even refractory? The horse that now glories to prance under thy weight; the vine which bleeds to satiate thine intemperance; the people of the feathered nations whose little carcasses must now indulge thy gluttony, will one day severally appear as the swiftest witnesses against thee. Thou ingrateful abuser of many blessings! What will become of thee when thy soul is demanded? How wilt thou stand before an infinitely holy God? Dreadful thine account; for God is just as well as beneficent."

I THOUGHT in my dream, that as I was thus ruminating, I was greatly surprized, by seeing the monster DEATH enter the field, through a breach which Sin had made in its fences. He appeared at first in form of a skeleton, with quiver and darts, as he is usually drawn——The most barbarous rage and inflexible cruelty sat brooding

brooding over his hollow eyes, whilſt his unſeemly fingers graſped the irreſiſtible ſcythe: the mattock and ſpade, wrought in a field of corruption, with the reſemblance of empty ſhades friſking over it, was the ſkeleton's flag. Cloſe behind him, almoſt treading on his heels, followed a lean, ill looking figure, with extended jaws; at the ſight of which my blood chilled in my veins, and my fleſh ſhuddered with perfect averſion. Nor was this averſion peculiar to me, for I perceived that all nature ſeemed to fly from its preſence; and, indeed, well might nature tremble at the thoughts of an encounter, for the ſame hunger-bitten follower of DEATH caſt a languiſhing look on every object, and yawned with deſire to devour it.

I THOUGHT that DEATH was no ſooner entered the field, than this meagre and greedy attendant addreſſed herſelf to him, in a craving manner, crying—Give—Give: on which the cruel ſkeleton brandiſhed his *ſhafts*, and fiercely threw from his unerring hand firſt at one, then at another object, till whole nations fell almoſt at once beneath his fatal javelin. One inſtance in particular

particular I ſaw, of a whole generation being ſwept away by one ſtroke of his ſcythe. Such was the amazing power he had obtained from complicated Sin, that all, eſpecially mankind, fell at the firſt touch of the deſtructive dart; and as ſoon as fallen, this deteſted monſter licked them up, and the world ſaw them no more. Here I ſaw, that this grand *devourer* made no diſtinction, betwixt this and that, but fed with as much delight on the fleſh of a *beggar*, as on that of *princes* and *nobles*; the celebrated *beauty*, and the *youthful hero*, afforded no greater reliſh to the hungry grave, than the country *landlady* or *ruſtic ſwain*; old and young, beauteous and unſeemly, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, were confuſedly jumbled together in its inſatiable maw.

At a very ſmall diſtance from this king of terrors, followed a tall upright perſonage, of the exacteſt ſymmetry in all her parts; her mein was noble, and all her geſture uniform. This royal and majeſtic perſon, ſat on a ſeat of *right judgment*, held a pair of *equal* balances in her hand, and had for her motto, "*I judge according*

to

to every man's works." I thought that this upright lady, who was in herſelf the moſt perfect beauty, inveſted DEATH with dreadful array, and equipped him in moſt of his terrors; as every human creature who fell a prey to the Ravager, was immediately weighed in her impartial balances. O, ſaid I, on ſeeing the proceſſion, if weighed in theſe equal and impartial balances, who is he that ſhall not be found *wanting?*

LAST of all, in the train of the ſkeleton, followed a monſter of deviliſh birth, and of ſuch a form as I had never ſeen before; it kept its eye, as I thought, continually fixed on the upright lady, whoſe name was JUSTICE, making inquiſition for blood. To this monſter was given every perſon whoſe actions did not weigh according to the rules of the ſanctuary, and they were all ſtored in its incorrupting bowels. What was very ſtrange, notwithſtanding all the perſons given to this inſatiable monſter remained entire within it, it continued as ſolicitous for more as it was the firſt moment of its being. Then I thought of

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that ſaying, DEATH and HELL are never ſatisfied.

I STOOD a conſiderable time admiring the ſtrangeneſs of the ſcene, and ſoon I diſcovered ſomething more; for DEATH metamorphoſed himſelf into a dragon of an enormous ſize, and approached near the place where I had taken my ſtanding for obſervation. Fearful leſt I ſhould be the prey at which he aimed, I began to think of methods of reſiſtance, as I could not reconcile myſelf to the thoughts of the *grave*; nor was I certified at that time, that I ſhould eſcape *hell* if he ſeized me. Up he came within a very little diſtance of me, which greatly rouſed my apprehenſions of danger; but to my unſpeakable joy he turned off to the left, followed by his dreadful retinue, and turning my eye to that ſide of the field, I ſoon diſcovered the prey at which he aimed. A beauteous lady in all the grandeur of life, decked with the richeſt ſilks, adorned with gold, pearls, and precious ſtones; attended by a numerous train of obedient ſervants, ſhe herſelf gliſtening like a goddeſs in the midſt of them. Every attendant

tendant carefully obſerved the glance of her eye, the wave of her hand, or the nod of her head, having learned by theſe ſigns to read her ladyſhip's pleaſure.

At firſt I was much amazed to ſee this jovial company altogether unapprehenſive of danger; none of them ſeemed to regard the monſter's approach, but maintained their jollity with as much delight as if DEATH had never been born. Touched with pity, I waved my hand to awake their attention, and intreated them to beware of yonder dragon; but at that inſtant I beheld a God who is ſaid to be preſident over this world, raiſe a duſt, and ſpread a miſt before their eyes, ſo that they could not diſcern the paths of the Deſtroyer; therefore they rejected my admonitions, ſcorned my fervor, and bid me be gone for a prating fool. But ſeeing their imminent danger, and moved with concern for them, I diſregarded their clamorous ſpeeches, hardened my countenance againſt ſhame, and lift up my voice higher and higher, uſing many arguments to perſuade them that the monſter DEATH was even then at hand to devour one or more of

them: but all in vain! for they would receive none of my admonitions, and mocked at my zealous concern. At laſt, unhappy moment! the inexorable tyrant came up with them, and with his forked talons ſeized my lady in the midſt of her jocularity. But, O how it would have ſhocked you to ſee the conſternation ſhe was in, when ſhe firſt perceived herſelf envenomed by his poiſonous ſting. Convinced that her time in this world was juſt at an end, and to the laſt degree unwilling to venture into a new ſtate of exiſtence, ſo much unknown to the beſt of men, and the dread of thoſe who are ignorant of God; O what would ſhe not have given for a ſhort reprieve? Never did criminal at the bar endure ſuch horror when the awful judge denounced the tremendous ſentence, as this wretched lady felt on the diſmal proſpect of futurity! If gold and ſilver could have redeemed her from DEATH, ſhe would freely have given as much as would build a *cathedral*, parted with her attendants and finery, and lived in adverſity the reſidue of her days; or if ſhe might have been exempted from the dreadful encounter, ſhe would even have given

given up the beloved pleaſures of plays, operas, and dancing aſſemblies. But alas! no bribe, nor promiſe of future amendment, could turn aſide the reſiſtleſs arrow, or procure the once gay delinquent the ſhorteſt reſpite.

She implored the aid of her ſkilful phyſician, attended by the faithful apothecary; yea, a whole troop of the faculty were ſummoned to exerciſe all their wiſdom, by any means to reſiſt the rapacity of the inexorable *tyrant*: but all in vain, for ſad experience proved that no medicine, however ſkilfully prepared, is a ſufficient antidote againſt the poiſon of Death's cankered ſting; therefore the lady, however reluctant, was forced to ſubmit to the *monarch of terrors*.

Leſt the length of my dream ſhould render it tedious to my readers, if told at once, I ſhall divide it into ſeveral parts, and ſhall ſtop here for the firſt time.

PART II.

HAVING had a full view of all that paſt betwixt DEATH and the lady, I could not forbear reflecting on the folly of inconſiderate mortals, who are every hour, for aught they know, expoſed to DEATH, and yet live altogether ſtrangers to a certain, an approaching eternity. It is awful indeed to baniſh the thoughts of futurity from the mind, and aſſiduouſly bury every ſerious reflection in the moat of ſenſuality! To ruſh from one prophane delight to another, till unwelcome DEATH puts an end to our career, and ſerves us as he did the unhappy lady. O what profit is there, ſaid I, in ſeparating leſs or more time every day for intimate fellowſhip with DEATH? In all probability, when grace is given ſo to do, our conflict with that mercileſs tyrant is far from being ſo terribly

terribly dreadful. It is true, I profeſs but a very ſmall acquaintance with men and things; yet I cannot but conjecture, that one reaſon why this lady and her acquaintance ſo utterly deteſted diſcourſes concerning DEATH, might be, becauſe ſuch diſcourſes naturally tend to ſtrip the pleaſures of the fleſh of all their imaginary charms. Then ſaid I again, O bleſſed, diſcriminately bleſſed of the Lord are they, whoſe exalted pleaſures can conſiſt with the moſt intimate acquaintance and fellowſhip with DEATH! They, and only they, are fit to enter the liſts with that formidable enemy, who can in life maintain converſe with him without ſpoiling the pleaſure of the day.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that DEATH having finiſhed his buſineſs with *madam*, transformed himſelf from the appearance of a *dragon* into the likeneſs of a grave and not uncomely perſonage, cloathed in a long flowing white robe, which hid all his native deformities. Thus equipped he directed his courſe towards me, which once again put me in a panic, leſt I ſhould be the deſtined prey, notwithſtanding he was not now ſo terrible as be-

fore; but as the all-directing Power ordained it, he passed by me, his rout lying now to the right. My attention being wholly engrossed by the atchievements of that terrible hero, I turned my eye after him, and at no great distance beheld a man of a middle age and upright mien, to whom he marched with all possible speed. No sooner was this good man apprised of his approach, than with a becoming serenity of countenance he went forth to meet him, and thus addressed him, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, for I long to be dissolved, that my better part may appear in the more immediate presence of the Conqueror.* DEATH replied, *Thou guarded one, all I have to do with thee, is but to sign thy dismission from this stage of action, and open thy passage to the land of immortal felicity.* He said, and instantly pierced his heart, with an arrow dipped in the blood of Immanuel; and as soon as the venerable man felt the arrow rankling in his bosom, in holy triumph he cried, O DEATH, where is thy sting! and where thy victory, O desired grave! Thanks, eternal thanks be to God, who hath given me, even me, the victory through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In

Is this DEATH? said I: DEATH, who of late was so cruel, when he had to deal with a person of a different turn of mind; call him no more the *monarch of terrors!* Yes, I will still give him that name, for it is essential to his very nature; if at any time, to any one, he be propitious and gentle, impute it not to any compassion in him, but to the blood, the precious, the atoning blood of the Redeemer; that blood, whose attractive virtue has drawn the poison even from the king of terrors; malignant to all, save those whose hearts and consciences by the divine Spirit are sprinkled therewith.

HOWEVER, I could not help thinking, that there was something in the case of this good man, as remarkably to be desired as that of the lady was dreadful; and I could then say with Balaam, I trust from a better spirit, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and my latter end be like his.*

DEATH, having released from the clayey tabernacle the waiting spirit of this sanctified disciple, changed himself a second time into the appearance of a *dragon*, whet-

ted his ſting, and put on all his formidable terrors; in which equipment, he bended his courſe towards a magnificent palace, which ſtood at ſome diſtance on this delightful plain. With timorous heart, and careful ſteps, I followed as near as I might with ſafety, and attentively watched to ſee what the next execution would be. At this time there happened to be a ball or dancing aſſembly in the palace; an aſſembly of people from whom every ſerious thought was baniſhed, and who were wholly devoted to voluptuouſneſs and diſſipation. As theſe people of pleaſure intently purſued with jovial glee, the muſical mazes of the dance, inviſible DEATH ſtole in amongſt and grinned ghaſtly upon them: but inattentive to the enemy's approach, they perſevered in their jocularity till he cruelly pierced the heart of two of the company, in whom the injected venom rankled, ſo as to prevent their enjoying a future merry meeting. I trembled with fear leſt the reſt of the company ſhould be taken; but afterwards underſtood that DEATH, rapacious as he is, always narrowly mindeth the contents of his commiſſion, without which he never appears on our mundane

mundane coaſt; but carries it along with him where-ever he goes, and never ſeizeth any, but thoſe whoſe names and places of abode are ſpecified therein; ſo that he is liable to no miſtake, as he is falſly charged with in the caſe of the two *Ireneus*'s.

I WAS not a little diverted at the conduct of ſome people, whom I heard crying out for DEATH ſeemingly in good earneſt, ſaying, Where is propitious DEATH? O that I knew where I could find him! but as ſoon as the terrible *ſkeleton* preſented himſelf, they fled for refuge to the *doctor*'s *embrace*. Others really amazed me, for they hunted through the field in a ſilent purſuit of DEATH, and as ſoon as they beheld him, plunged themſelves into his devouring jaws.

MANY ſuch inſtances I ſaw, but muſt at preſent forbear relating them, leſt the length of my dream ſhould give occaſion to people of a cenſorious ſpirit, to charge me with over-ſleeping my time: but what I ſaw filled me with uncommon concern for my fellow creatures, who are under the arreſt of DEATH before they are aware——

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hurried off from the ſtage of action, before they well know themſelves to be mortal. Grieved to ſee the thoughtleſs ſtupidity of blinded mortals, and the unretarded havock made of them by mercileſs DEATH, I cried out in bitterneſs of ſoul, *O that they were wiſe and underſtood this! O that they would conſider their latter end!*

As I was thus breathing forth deſires after the happineſs of my contemporaries, a venerable perſonage approached and accoſted me thus; *Young man, I perceive that the viſible deſtruction brought upon mankind, hath filled your heart with honeſt concern; you mourn to them, but they will not lament; you pipe unto them, but they will not dance; rather, for your pains, they will laugh you to ſcorn, and bait you under the ridiculous name of* Fanatic. *Mankind prone to ſenſual pleaſures, and enſlaved to fleſhly luſts, will not, cannot bear your ſerious admonitions: but if you pleaſe to go along with me, I will ſhew you ſomewhat of the various forms of death, as it is met with by ſaints and ſinners; which diſcovery, if attended with the divine bleſſing, may be of great advantage to you all the days of your life.*

BEING

Being naturally of an inquisitive mind, I readily embraced the offered favour, gratefully thanked the gentleman, and pleased myself with hopes of seeing much of the monster Death, with whom I expected, ere long, in cruel conflict to encounter. But, dear sir, said I, before we depart from hence, let me beg to be acquainted with the story of yonder lady, who was so rudely served by the *merciless* tyrant. The lady, said he, after whom you inquire, was named *Teresa*, the only daughter of a wealthy gentleman and lady in the neighbourhood; she was blessed with a person peculiarly elegant and pleasing; her countenance displayed the most agreeable softness, and her snowy skin even vied with the feathers of the swan for whiteness; her shape was faultless in the eye of the most discerning, in every part finished with the most perfect symmetry.

Thus accomplished, she was taught from her cradle to value herself upon her beauty and gentility, and her fond and foolish parents soothed her vanity by all that their dotage could contrive; no care nor expence was thought too much to render her

her education perfectly polite, and to ſet off the graces of her frame to the beſt advantage; but little or no care was taken to improve the infinitely more valuable ſoul.

Her taſte for dreſs was ſo remarkably elegant; her manner of dancing ſo particularly genteel; ſuch was her great dexterity at cards; and ſo ſingularly happy was ſhe in deviſing ſchemes and forming parties of pleaſure, that ſhe became the moſt celebrated toaſt of the day. Thus ſhe lived, raviſhed with falſe pleaſures, and dead to every ſerious and divine principle, till Death ſeized her unawares, and hurried her off from all her delights into a dreadful and unthought-of eternity, where we leave her in a ſtate for ever *unalterable*, and go over to yonder building, to ſee what may be learned there.

This ſaid, he conducted me through the ſpacious meadow, towards a magnificent building of the moſt curious architecture, erected on four rows of columns, partly of the Corinthian and partly of the Ionic order, in one corner of the enamelled plain; which palace we entered without

out formality, my guide leading the way. He was now pleaſed to take me by the hand, and lead me into a chamber where were ſeveral people of both ſexes attending a ſick man, who lay in dreadful diſtreſs on a bed of ſorrow; he was, to all appearance very near the expiring moment; every one waited for the laſt convulſive throw. My guide having, by ſome wiſdom peculiar to himſelf, rendered us both inviſible; unperceived either by him or his attendants, we went up cloſe to his bed-ſide. He ſtarted—he ſtared—and his eyes rolled moſt frightfully in his head, as if they had followed ſome terrible apparition, ſuddenly traverſing the room; then he was ſeized with convulſive agonies which diſtorted every one of his feeble organs. In this ſtrange confuſion of mind and awful diſtreſs of body, he vehemently ſtruck with both hands and feet, as if environed with deathly enemies, from whom he deſired an aſylum of ſafety, and with an eye ſanguine beyond conception, he looked on thoſe who attended at his bed-ſide, as if he would have ſaid, *O that you could help me now in my laſt difficulties!* Ye were the companions and aſſiſtants of my for-

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mer pleaſures; but now, alas, ye intermeddle not with my pain. The redemption of the ſoul is precious and ceaſeth for ever. O that I had been ſtrangled in the birth, or dropped into the grave from my mother's breaſt, before I had begun my life of rebellion!

I THOUGHT in my dream, that a neighbouring miniſter came in, with a deſign to aſſiſt the dying man in his laſt extremity; he prayed for, and would have converſed with him, but all to no purpoſe, for the diſtreſſed delinquent continued in growing anguiſh, and could not endure either his prayers or converſation. The mourning relations procured what aſſiſtance could be had from the faculty, by all poſſible means to prevent the ſucceſs of the ghaſtly deſtroyer: but alas! his diſeaſe is beyond the power of phyſic to ſuppreſs. His trembling heart beats thick with horror, and finds not room ſufficient for fair play in his roomy cheſt, whilſt the rank venom of the deadly fever ſhoots through his bowels like a burning arrow and drinks up the ſtreams of life: Yet ſtill ſtudious for his relief they poured the phyſic into his

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tormented body which only ſerved to augment his pain. Ah, ſaid I, how feeble are all our friendly efforts when our unhappy friend has to do with DEATH? O Alas! what avails it to poſſeſs ſtrong and brauny limbs, or ſquare and well built ſhoulders, ſeeing a fit of common ſickneſs debilitates the moſt robuſt. O may my glorying be founded on that which neither ſickneſs nor DEATH can deſtroy. I was deeply affected with this melancholy ſpectacle; his tender wife, and other dear relatives, ſtood round his bed, bedewing it with floods of tears, whilſt mad with deſpair he tugs eagerly for life, and in dying rage clenches what comes next to hand. O my ſoul, ſure it is a ſolemn thing to die: and O tremendous to die in deſpair, how dreadful! Even his little children forgot to play and learned to be ſerious. In a chamber adjacent to that of their dying father, they looked wiſhfully on each other and gave vent to their infant ſorrows. I could not ſtand the mournful ſight, without mingling my tears with theirs. My guide, perceiving the impreſſion which the affecting ſcene had made upon me, rebuked my want of reſolution, in being ſo much depreſſed before

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one half of the ſcene was unfolded; and I, ſenſible of my defect, ſubmiſſively yielded to the reproof of my wiſe ſuperior. I thought that, pleaſed with my ſubmiſſion, he opened a box of invaluable ointment, and therewith anointed my eyes, whereby they were ſo much ſtrengthened, that I could then readily ſee things which in themſelves are altogether inviſible to the unaſſiſted natural eye. Then it was that I ſoon perceived that thoſe convulſive pangs, diſtorted features, rolling eyes, wild and diſtracted looks, &c. were not merely the effects of nature ſtruggling with the growing diſeaſe, but proceeded moſtly from a *mental* cauſe. A fearful avenue was opened before him, leading into a dreadful ETERNITY, at the not far diſtant end of which avenue he beheld the tremendous reward of all his ungodlineſs: this, this it was which cauſed ſuch perturbation in his diſtracted mind; this it was which made death ſo terribly dreadful to him; and this it is which affecteth my mind now I relate the ſtory.

NATURE, utterly reluctant to be diſſolved, exerted her ſtrongeſt powers, and made her utmoſt efforts to preſerve the union betwixt

betwixt ſoul and body inviolate. The alarmed ſoul, having ſuch an undeſirable proſpect before her, ſhrunk down into the loweſt caverns of the heart, as it were to hide herſelf from the reſearches of DEATH, which ſhe ſaw approaching to diſlodge her, and joined iſſue with ſhocked nature, to repel the power of the fierce deſtroyer. But ſoon, very ſoon, enfeebled nature, having exhauſted her ſtrength, ſwooned into helpleſs inactivity; then the frightened ſoul, finding herſelf deſerted by her weak ally, ſeemed half perſuaded to yield the debate. Then ſhe quitted her interior lurking places, and, quaking as ſhe paſſed through the lanes of life, aſcended to the pale quivering lips, where ſhe ſat aſtoniſhed at the dire event. I thought then of the propriety of thoſe verſes of the celebrated Dr. Watts:

"Death! 'tis a melancholy day
"To thoſe that have no God,
"When the poor ſoul is forc'd away,
"To ſeek her laſt abode;
"In vain to heav'n ſhe lifts her eyes,
"But guilt, a heavy chain,
"Still drags her downward from the ſkies,
"To darkneſs, fire, and pain."

Dread

Dread amazement seized her, when she beheld lurking in the chamber a train of ghastly furies waiting to carry her thence: Precipitately back she fled, resumed her position of the interior regions, roused up the relidue of nature, fled to every avenue, and wildly shricked for help: But all in vain her unequal resistance; for DEATH, like a stanch murderer, stood firm to his purpose, and closely pursued her through all the lanes of life, till he drove her out of the confines of mortality. At last the fatal moment came, vanquished nature laid down her arms, the weary heart forbore to throb, and DEATH displayed the trophies of victory all around.

DEATH having broke through all the redoubts of desolated nature, the dismayed ghost, now forced forth from her wonted dwelling, remained in a defenceless condition, exposed to the insults of merciless fiends, destitute of an asylum. Unhappy spectre! as soon as she arrived at the pale portal of the lifeless lips, she began to seek for a place of refuge; she looked up towards heaven, but dreadful was the prospect, for she beheld an incensed God loos-

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ing his engines, and beginning to play his flaming indignation upon her: to shun this inevitable evil, she looked downward, but equally terrible was her prospect there; with consummate horror she beheld the yawning jaws of intolerable hell extended wide to receive her. There being now no flying from the environing evils, the swift messengers of destruction seized, shouldered, and bore her away, to appear before the judgment seat of injured and incensed justice, where she received the fearful, the irrevocable sentence, *Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* But, oh! no tongue can express, no heart can conceive her struggles and shriekings, when she first felt the tormenting touch of the intolerable talons of hell! her lamentations ascended even to the relentless throne of God.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that by this time, I was almost dead with surprize and fear; but my benevolent guide imparted to me a cordial, in my esteem, infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of the Indies,

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Indies, by which I was much refreſhed, and after ſome time I addreſſed him thus:

O, SIR, what have I heard! what have I ſeen! ſurely this man muſt have been ſome vile, notoriouſly wicked, and uncommon ſinner, which makes his latter end ſo terrible.

To which the venerable gentleman replied; you may be aſſured, young man, that the LORD's judgments are juſt, and that he condemns only in righteouſneſs; and if this man had not been a ſinner, his final ſentence had not been ſuch as you have heard and ſeen. That he was a great ſinner is certain, but that he was greater than others I will not affirm, as there is but too much reaſon to believe, that there are thouſands in the world as wicked as he, who, if boundleſs mercy prevent not, will meet with the ſame condemnation with him.

THIS man, whoſe fate you ſo much deplore, was named *Contumacio*, a perſon ever addicted to rebellion: when young, he had the advantage of a religious education, which

which was no ſmall aggravation of his future ſins, as moral inſtructions were thereby early impreſſed on his mind. From hence he was conſtrained, however reluctant, to have ſome ſenſe of what is in itſelf either morally good or morally evil, and was often ſubjected to the ſting of an uneaſy conſcience, eſpecially after any groſs outbreaking in ſin: thoſe pangs of mind extorted from him many promiſes and ſtrong reſolutions of amendment, and oftentimes drove him to his knees in the cloſet, as well as to an attendance on public worſhip frequently on the ſabbath-day.

You will not think it ſtrange, I ſuppoſe, if I tell you, that by his occaſional attendance on the word preached, together with his converſe with religious people, he attained a good degree of ſpeculative knowledge both of the law and goſpel. This made him look on himſelf as a converted perſon, notwithſtanding he poſſeſſed not one deſire after the heart-cleanſing power of religion; but, amidſt all his pretenſions, allowed himſelf in ſecret ſin, and pretty often his ſins were obvious enough to beholders. As his religion was far from uniform

form, at ſome ſeaſons neglecting the word preached, he aſſociated himſelf with thoſe whom he called *good companions*, and enjoyed the pleaſures which flow from drinking and gaming; and ſo long as conſcience was mild, he laughed at the weakneſs and narrow ſpiritedneſs of thoſe who could not reliſh the pleaſure which he enjoyed in his indulged liberties.

THUS it was with poor *Contumacio*, for the moſt part, when health and proſperity ſtretched their eaſy wings over his dwelling; for he ſeldom dealt in religion, but in caſes of adverſity, which though not often, he was ſometimes viſited with, as you ſhall hear.

IT was the Lord's pleaſure to viſit him on a certain time with a violent fit of ſickneſs, attended with many ſymptoms of imminent danger, inſomuch that he thought himſelf on the very brink of eternity. The dreadful apprehenſions of approaching DEATH impreſſed his mind with much ſorrow for ſin, and gave birth to ſome hopes, eſpecially with the leſs intelligent of the godly, that the work might be real and

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saving, and that his affliction might prove a sanctified means of his conversion. But, alas! my friend, all their hopes were blasted ere they well began to blossom; for as his disease abated of its violence, his convictions abated proportionably; till quite recovered from his bodily complaint, and then he was likewise relieved from the fever in his conscience.

THERE is an old saying, "Afflictions "never fail to make a man either better or "worse," exactly verified in this unhappy person, for he increased daily in wickedness to that degree, that he laughed at every thing sacred: for one warning after another being disregarded, it pleased the Lord at last to leave him, to work iniquity with greediness. Thus it was that perverse *Contumacio* was hurried forward by his carnal acquaintance, and his own vicious inclinations, from one sin to another, till he had brought himself to what you have now beheld.

THIS awful account of the unhappy *Contumacio* greatly affected me, and as I was deeply musing on what I had heard

and ſeen, my venerable guide thus addreſſed me: *Come, now let us take a view of the friends of the deceaſed.* And now my attention was wholly engroſſed with what paſſed amongſt them, the moſt of whom were bathed in tears.

God reſt his ſoul, ſays one, he was as good a natured man as ever lived. Ay, that he was, ſays a ſecond, and as good a huſband as any in the world, and minded that that was good too; though to be ſure, poor man, he was not without his failings, but the beſt have their failings as well as he. Very true, ſays a third, God help us, we are all frail creatures; poor man, it is well for him that he has got ſafe out of this troubleſome world; it is better for them that are dead, than for us that are alive; to be ſure, he is the happieſt of us all. Thus they reaſoned, and occaſionally threw in conſultations in regard to the order of the funeral.

I TURNED to my guide with amazement on my countenance, and ſtared him full in the face, on which he ſtopped me ſhort before

before I had time to ſpeak, and thus it was he addreſſed me.

THESE people have no notion at all, of ſin being puniſhed after death; but whatever courſe of life a perſon has led whilſt here on earth, they have not the leaſt doubt of his admiſſion into heaven when he dies. Hell might never have been made as a place of puniſhment, for any notion which they have of it. If you, or any other perſon, were to tell theſe people, that their departed friend has already taken up his abode in thoſe diſmal, unfathomable depths, where the worm of conſcience dieth not, and where the fire of unſpeakable torment cannot be quenched, they would look on you as an uncharitable, hard-hearted wretch, unfit for the ſociety of men. After all you have heard and ſeen, you will no doubt think it ſtrange, that the miniſter who ſhall perform the funeral rites, ſhould commit the body of this man under the name and character of *brother* to the duſt, in a ſure and certain hope of a bleſſed reſurrection with the juſt, notwithſtanding he is for ever ſeparated from them; and yet I can tell you that

ſuch are the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhments of ſome nations, that was not the miniſter thus to bury him, it might coſt him no leſs than degradation from his ſacred office *.

BUT,

* I have often thought it a very great hardſhip upon conſcientious miniſters of the church of England, that by the office for burying of the dead, they are tied to uſe the very ſame form over the greateſt of ſaints and the vileſt of ſinners, which muſt be an heavy burden to an honeſt intelligent mind. The form is admirably adapted to the burial of a ſaint, but in the higheſt degree prepoſterouſly falſe and abſurd when uſed at the interment of a wicked man, who dies impenitent and in his ſins.

For as much as it hath pleaſed Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himſelf the ſoul of our dear brother here departed.—This is true of the departed ſaint; but with what propriety can it be ſaid of a wicked man that he is a brother to the faithful? Is the death of ſuch a man in *mercy*, in great mercy? Hath God indeed taken the ſoul of the wicked ſinner to himſelf inſtead of denouncing upon him the ſentence exhibited in the word? *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire*, &c? Is this a taking of the ſoul to himſelf in great mercy as expreſt in the ritual.

We therefore commit his body to the ground——in ſure and certain hope of the reſurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

How

But, my benevolent friend, may it pleaſe you to inform me, whether any reaſon may be aſſigned, why this man, although wicked, ſhould be ſo troubled at his death, for I have ſomewhere read, that the wicked have no *bands* in their death, and are not troubled as other men? To which he replied, yes, young man, you have ſo read, if you have read your bible; but you may know, that poor *Contumacio* was thoroughly awakened to a ſenſe of wrath on account of his ſins, and they appeared to him worſe than ſo many *dreary* ghoſts, or hideous *ſpectres*, which made him, as you ſaw, ſo terribly alarmed, when the invincible *ſkeleton* approached, and preſented the point of his envenomed ſhaft. A world! ten thouſand worlds would he have given, could he for them

How can this hope of reſurrection to eternal life be ſure and certain, ſeeing the wicked ſhall certainly be raiſed to everlaſting puniſhment and ſhall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God. It would be well if ſome expedient was found for eaſing the minds of the conſcientious part of the clergy, either by accommodating the rites to the death of a ſinner as well as that of a ſaint, or leaving the miniſter at liberty to uſe or not uſe this form, as his diſcretion might dictate from his knowledge of the party deceaſed.

have been told how to evade the fatal thruſt. But the ſtroke, not to be evaded, he was obliged to ſuſtain; but oh! may you never know ſuch a latter end!

His great diſorder of mind was partly owing to his being poſſeſſed of a larger degree of moral knowledge than ſome of his neighbours, ſo that very many of his ſins were committed againſt the light of his own conſcience, which made them the more dreadful unto him. But the chief reaſon is, God doth ſometimes alarm the conſcience of a departing ſinner, that he may manifeſt his judgments for the convincing of ſome, and leaving of others without excuſe.

If you pleaſe, I would have you obſerve yonder woman, who ſits penſive at the other end of the room; perhaps her converſion is one end which the Lord propoſed by his judgments manifeſted in this unhappy man; and let me tell you, *Novitia*, I am of opinion that ſhe will never forget this awful providence whilſt ſhe herſelf is continued in being. Believe me, Jehovah's ways are in the deep waters, and by far more intricate than the paths of the whirlwind.

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The great, the ſovereign houſholder, hath an indiſputable right, if he ſee meet, to burn his *wooden* veſſels, that with their aſhes he may brighten his veſſels of *gold* and *ſilver*. Now you have ſeen this man, with his end, come along with me, and another ſcene ſhall be unfolded to you.

PART III.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that, according to his directions, I followed my guide through diverſe turnings, in this ſtately manſion, till we arrived in an apartment, where was an old gentleman, laid on a couch, dictating to an attorney, who ſat by him, writing his laſt will and teſtament. He ſigned, ſealed, and delivered the deed, and then with the greateſt vivacity proceeded to relate the various virtues of his life, ſeemingly extremely pleaſed with the recapitulation.

He willed his children to follow his example; and, the better to encourage them to ſuch an imitation, he told them, that it was but a ſmall ſum of money which he and their mother poſſeſſed at their firſt entrance on the marriage ſtate; and how, by their diligence and frugality, they had

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ſaved ſo and ſo, mentioning the legacies which he had bequeathed in his will; adding, that if they were diligent and frugal, they might alſo, proportionably, increaſe that which, he bleſſed God, he had procured for them. He added farther; "My dear children, I am very ill, and doubt I cannot recover; the doctor gives me but little hope; but it is what we muſt all come to, and you are the witneſſes of my conduct, ever ſince you were capable of diſcerning betwixt wright and wrong. I have been juſt in all my dealings; never impoſed on any man; and now, God help me, I am dying, none that ever I dealt with can ſay to me, *Thou didſt me wrong*; or *thou haſt cheated me in this or that*. This gives me great ſatisfaction in my preſent caſe. I thank God, I can now ſay, that I never ſwore an oath in my days, but have often been angry with that wicked practice in others. I never was drunk, but always deteſted that beaſtly and waſteful ſin; nor, as I remember, did I ever tell a lie; but have always minded my duty to God, attended at church and ſacrament duly; and if ever I ſinned at any time, I was careful to pray for mercy, was ſorry

for it, and confeſſed to God, who is merciful, and will I hope pardon the frailties which we are all ſubject to. If at any time I ſinned, it was not with a wicked deſign, for, I thank God, I have always had a good heart, and meant well in what I did; and it were a great ſin to diſbelieve in the mercy of God. I hope that ſeeing I have always believed in Chriſt, been diligent in providing for my family, have carefully huſbanded what I got by my buſineſs, and have been mindful of my duty to God, I have little reaſon to fear but it will be well with me; and now, as in all probability, I cannot recover, I have ſettled every thing, I hope, to your ſatisfaction, as well as my own, and can die in peace."—Thus it was that he inſtructed his children, in his lateſt hours, and ſome of them confirmed all that he ſaid, by applauding the truth of every ſentence. However, I thought all along, that I diſcerned a ſecret joy amongſt the young people; notwithſtanding, for decency's ſake, they aſſumed ſeveral of the ſymptoms of grief; and was confirmed in my opinion, by overhearing the eldeſt ſon, when the father ſaid, *In all probability I cannot re-*

cover, to whiſper ſecretly to himſelf, *I hope you cannot*; and when the old man ſaid, he had ſettled every thing to his childrens ſatisfaction, the ſon whiſpered again, *Ay, if you would make quick work of dying.* I then thought how fooliſh it is in thoſe parents who ſnatch at every opportunity of amaſſing wealth for their children, ſeeing that thereby they are ſo far from gaining their love and eſteem, that they become impatient for their death, in order to be poſſeſſed of their ſubſtance.

In the mean while the viſitants of the old gentleman comforted him againſt the fears of death, by putting him often in mind of his life ſo well ſpent, which will, ſaid they, no doubt, make you a happy man, as ſoon as you are delivered from this afflicted body.

Notwithstanding I was greatly ſurpriſed at the ingratitude of young *Phylargyrus* in wiſhing the death of his father; I could not help being well pleaſed with the diſpoſition of the old gentleman's affairs; and, turning to my guide, with ſatisfaction viſible on my countenance, I ſaid,

Ah!

Ah, ſir! what a happineſs is it to be rich in good works! O with what pleaſure may this man die, when he looks back, and takes a view of a life ſpent to ſuch great advantage! How vaſt is the difference betwixt this and the other man's eſtate! *Contumacio* went diſtracted to hell, but *Avaro* will doubtleſs go joyfully to heaven the next moment after his diſſolution.

To which my guide replied, I ſee, *Novitio*, you are too prone to judge according to outward appearance; not conſidering that appearance and reality are very often two different things; but wait with patience, only a little while, and you ſhall ſee an end of *Avaro*, with all his happineſs, which you ſo much admire.

By this time I thought that old *Avaro* declined apace, and ever-watchful Death, who attended on his bed, impoſed a fatal weight on his labouring heart: a dark miſt beclouded his heavy eyes, and a cold dew reſted clammy on his forehead, ſo that every pulſe was expected to beat a finis. But as there yet remained a few ſands in

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the mortal end of his glaſs, he recovered a little, and, after ſome time, he ſaid, I thought I ſhould have ſpoken no more; but I have yet time to bid you farewell: farewell, my dear children; I muſt pay this debt to nature, but my peace is made with God, and I die comfortable. This ſaid, his head declined, his eyes became fixed, and all the ſymptoms of immediate death were upon him.

It was now that my venerable guide bid me to mind well who were in the chamber with us; on which, lending a cloſe attention, I beheld ſeveral ghaſtly furies, in all the deformities of *reprobation*, ſilently lurking round the bed of the ſick man; but none of them offered to come near to diſturb his peace. The good *Keratio*, my benevolent guide, perceiving that the diſcovery had ſtruck me with horror, willed me not to be afraid, for, ſaid he, they will all be very quiet till the old man's departure, and even then they will diſcover themſelves to none but him.

You will eaſily believe, that I now began to change my opinion of *Avaro*, having

ing ſeen who were his ſilent attendants. The moment of ſeparation come, the beguiled ſoul took a kind farewell of the body, and came forth from the interior regions, ſmiling with hopes of the divine reward; and as ſoon as ſhe aſcended to the lifeleſs lips, ſhe looked around to eſpy her tutelar angel; but dreadful was her aſtoniſhment when ſhe perceived that there was no guardian near, to bear her thence in ſafety, but a train of relentleſs furies waiting to carry her to their dark abode! With infinite terror ſhe turned about, and ſtrove to regain her former poſſeſſion; but now, alas! the gates of mortality were ſhut, and the body refuſed to admit its former tenant. The ſly ſeducers, as ſo many mercileſs tigers, leaped upon and ſeized her in the midſt of her horror and diſtraction. O what heart can conceive, what pen can deſcribe, the dreary diſtraction of the diſmayed ſpectre, when ſhe found herſelf ſhackled by thoſe cruel tormentors! A faint deſcription thereof would make the ſtouteſt heart to tremble, and the ruddieſt countenance to gather blackneſs. The ſly ſeducers, who attended him incognito during life, remained quiet as

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poſſible till the deceived ghoſt was ſafely diſlodged, and then they aſſumed the devil in all his infernal forms and tyranny; ſeized, fettered, and bore her away, notwithſtanding ſhe reſiſted their fury with inexpreſſible ſtruggles. O my ſoul! how dreadful muſt the diſappointment of that man be at death, who in his life time feeds upon the tranſient hope of an hypocrite, and builds his expectance of future happineſs on a ſandy foundation! Inſtead of being careſſed in the boſom of everlaſting love, he is enfolded in the arms of eternal deſpair; inſtead of partaking of the ineffable joys of the righteous at death, he is precipitately plunged into the gulph of never-ending anguiſh.

It was now I began to underſtand the meaning of ſuch ſayings as theſe. *The hope of the hypocrite ſhall periſh; they look for peace, but behold evil cometh, &c.*

Astonished at the event, I turned haſtily to my guide, and aſked him how it came to paſs, that a man of ſo many good works ſhould at laſt become a prey to devouring flames? Sir, ſaid I, how is it?

it? Can it possibly be consistent with the goodness and equity of God? To which the worthy gentleman meekly replied,

I TELL you, *Novitio*, you must not, from what you have seen, infer, that the ways of the Lord are unequal, and that he disposeth of his creatures unjustly. For all the good works which *Avaro* boasted so much of, and depended upon for his acceptance with God, were good *only in shew*; they proceeded not from a principle of living faith; and you are informed by the word of divine truth, that whatever is not of faith is sin. Nor had the blind *Avaro* the least regard to the glory of God in all or any of them, but they were performed with a view to answer selfish ends; therefore, when they came to be viewed by the eye of *impartial justice*, they were all accounted as abominable deeds: for no act is acceptable to God, unless it spring from a living faith in Christ, and a principle of love to God. He had indeed some slight acquaintance with the external forms of religion, but was wholly a stranger to its heart-cleansing, and world-overcoming power; but however clean he had made the out-side of the cup and platter,

being inwardly full of ungodliness and error, he was unmeet for, and consequently could not possess a dwelling in the holy of holies. *Avaro*, whilst alive, was one of those deceived people who esteem *gain to be godliness*; his whole life was spent to the end of getting; and, being successful therein, he valued himself far above others, fondly alledging that all his increase was owing to his own industry; and if at any time he thought of divine Providence, he imagined that his worldly prosperity was an evidence of his enjoying the favour of the Almighty. As to his religion, he seldom omitted going to church twice on the Lord's-day, and, since he was old and unfit for business, once almost every day, by which he thought he merited greatly at the hand of God; and was the more confirmed in his opinion, inasmuch as some of his neighbours did not attend on public worship once in a month.

When at any time he gave a small part of his substance to *feed the hungry or clothe the naked*, it was generally to wipe away the score of sin from his conscience; or to prevent his being thought a covetous person,

ſon; for this was a ſcandal which he could not endure, but looked on his carefulneſs as an excellent virtue. Yea, ſo ignorant was he of the pure and ſpiritual law of God, that he expected to be rewarded for gathering together fortunes for his children. Some legacies he hath indeed left in his will for charitable uſes; for he was one of thoſe griping miſers who have no heart to do a generous action, whilſt their ſubſtance may be called their own, and who to make an atonement for their having withheld more than is meet, bequeath ſums of money for the uſe of public edifices at their death. Strange infatuation, to think that a defrauding of the legal heir, can be acceptable to the infinitely holy God, or in any wiſe ſtamp a reputation upon the character of man. Whilſt *Avaro* lived, there was none in the neighbourhood more ſucceſsful than he; but however he ſucceeded in his former enterprizes, he is wofully diſappointed in death; for now the die is caſt, his loſs is irrecoverable, and his afflictions are beyond a remedy. Believe me, young man, continued *Veratio*, all diſappointments, loſſes, and croſſes which can poſſibly happen in life, are infinitely rather

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to be choſen, than that diſappointment which the ſucceſsful phariſee meets with at death.

I was exceedingly ſhocked at the fearful deception of this worldling, rich in life, but poor in death; and in my confuſion of mind I breathed forth ſome ſuch deſire as this, "Lord deliver from the ſubtle, "inſinuating love of the world, and ſtu"pid ignorance of thy holy ways." My guide interrupting ſaid, a ſuitable prayer; for the love of money is the root of all evil, ſpringing from and ever attended with ignorance of the holy God; ingenious and wiſe was that heart that could ſuggeſt ſuch a prayer, as *Lord, give me neither poverty nor riches*, &c. Which of your acquaintance, *Novitio*, think you, can heartily expreſs ſuch a prayer?

AVARO being ſtretched out a lifeleſs clayey corps, *Veratio* led me away to a third manſion in this ſtately fabric, where another diſtreſſing ſcene was unfolded. The unhappy *Securus*, a young man of about twenty-one years of age, was the poſſeſſor here; but his term, alas! appeared

peared to be near an end, being almoſt ſpent in a conſumption; yet unhappy youth, he could not bear to be told that he was a dying man. His relations and friends did what they could to prevent him having any thoughts of DEATH and a future ſtate, by baſely and ſinfully flattering him with hopes of recovery, notwithſtanding they evidently ſaw, that, without a miracle being wrought, his death was inevitable.

One told him, that ſhe knew a certain perſon who had been as bad, if not worſe than *Securus* was then, but was now happily recovered, and was as well as ever. Another adviſed to ſend for Mr. *Medicus*, a diſtant phyſician, who ſhe ſaid had performed wonders in curing conſumptions. A third perſuaded him that he looked better than formerly, and was likely to recover: but not one of them were faithful enough to put him in mind of approaching DEATH, and a *never-ending eternity*, which he was juſt ready to launch into, leſt they ſhould diſturb the tranquility of his mind.

GRIEVED

Grieved in ſoul to hear them flatter the blinded wretch with hopes of life, even when they ſaw that his death was to be expected every moment; I was about to have ſpoken, but my guide prevented, by telling me that his friends would look on me as bad as a murderer if I ſhould diſturb his conſcience, by aſking him any pertinent queſtions relating to a future ſtate. Is this a diſplay of parental affection and brotherly friendſhip? ſaid I. Miſerable relations! Unprofitable and pernicious friends, whoſe very friendſhip is the moſt barbarous cruelty! Is it not enough that he hath lived a life of unintermitted rebellion againſt God, but you muſt ſtudy to get him out of the world inſenſible of it? Wretched miniſters of falſe comfort are ye all! O my God, let me ever be preſerved from the fatal influence of ſoothing flattery! This, ſaid, my guide addreſſed me in the following manner: This is young *Securus*, a thoughtleſs youth, accuſtomed to put the evil day afar from him, minding only the preſent time; for if it happened, as ſometimes it did, that the thoughts of Death encroached on his mind, he lulled his conſcience to quietneſs, by promiſing to repent

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of his sins, and amend his ways hereafter, when he was old, and had enjoyed the pleasures of life; little thinking that he was to be cut off in the very bloom of youth. *Securus* was one of those who pretend to be zealously affected for the church, but never come near its assemblies; and even now, in his latest hours, he has not the least thought of DEATH and eternity; but is angry with his physician, because he will prescribe no more medicines for him. Still he hopes to prolong his life, notwithstanding his lungs are so far spent that he can hardly utter one half of a contracted sentence. In all appearance he will never think of DEATH and judgment, heaven and hell, joy and pain, till the flaming torments playing around him rouse his sleeping soul. Then, if not before, he will begin to think of eternity. At last he will be convinced, that the torments of hell are insupportable, and of never-ending duration, though he disregarded every threatning thereof denounced in the sacred oracles.

VAIN *Securus*, whilst in health and prosperity, laughed at the timidity of those

who

who had any dread of offending a holy and terrible God; and accounted religion to be nothing else but whining hypocrisy; but ere long he will feel to his sorrow that the wrath of a sin-avenging God is indeed something to be afraid of, and that religion is real and not chimerical.

In health he accounted the lives of the religious to be madness, and their latter end without honour. So he lived, and now his insolence, in basely contemning the ways and people of the Lord, hath issued in that stupefaction of mind, which ere long will terminate in intolerable anguish; then he will be fully convinced, that his supposed fools are the only wise ones on the face of the earth, and that their latter end is more honourable than that of all men besides.

This awful proof of degeneracy touched me so sensibly, that, as I thought, I uttered some such a lamentation as this.

O Sin! monstrous beyond all productions! Thou most abominable of every evil! Thou hast bereaved us of our na-

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tive knowledge poſſeſſed in our creation ſtate, and diffuſed darkneſs through the whole underſtanding. Thou haſt changed our ancient love into preſent hatred, and all our former holineſs gives place to ſinful inſenſibility. Can a man ſtand at the entrance of the grave, and there concert the ſchemes of earthly pleaſure? Having his feet on the threſhold in the gates of perdition, can he yet believe himſelf in a land of ſecurity and reſt? Who could ever conceive, without ocular demonſtration, that ſuch blindneſs over-ſpread the mind of a rational being, as ſhould cauſe him to look on his body as tenable, even when in the chilling embraces of deſolating DEATH? But ſo it is, through thy prevalency, thou moſt loathſome of every nature! By thee deſtruction overwhelms the human race, though fertile ſource of innumerable evils! O let me for ever admire the diſcriminating grace of the great *Three in One*, who by the ſpecial influences of the divine ſpirit hath realized ſin to me in all its hateful deformities and dreadful conſequences; hath made my once ſtupified and benumbed conſcience feel a gentle touch of his fatherly anger on its account;

fin; and hath, according to his own purpose and grace, been pleased to lead me for pardon and acceptance unto that precious blood, enriched with all the fulness of indwelling God-head! O my soul, bless thou the Lord for a sense of sin, for though it is painful, it is also salutary. Let them not be accounted for thy companions, who deem a sense of sin to be superfluous in religion.

It was now that I thought my guide *Varatio* interrupted me, just as the sin-hardened *Securus* departed this life; and said, thoughtless he lived, and thoughtless he died; but now he is thoughtful enough. Believe me, *Novitio*, he hath already thought more of hell, sin and rebellion, than ever he did in all his life. Look you, *Novitio*, to yonder lake of fire and brimstone, where he is already plunged, undergoing the unknown tortures of the second death. And now he hath a never-ending eternity before him, to think of what is past, and what is future. Unhappy is he who is thoughtless in life, and unprovided for in death, like the wretched *Securus!* A pompous funeral is indeed

designed him; but, alas! what pleasure can lifeless clay, or a tormented ghost, take in funeral pomp, or the crocodiline tears of the mercenary mourner? But, let us leave his relicts to endure that honour designed to be imposed upon them, and let you and I see what farther discoveries we can make.

O, Sir, said I, what dreadful scenes you unfold! Is this *Veratio*, the portraiture of unmasked death? Do all my fellow-creatures die thus miserable? And is there no such thing as a comfortable DEATH to be seen? O, sir, my very flesh shudders at these awful discoveries.

My guide replied, know, young man, that sorrow is antecedent to joy, grief before consolation, darkness before light, and humility before honour. Shrink not back when the cup of bitterness kisseth your lips, seeing it is preparative to the cup of salvation. But if *Novitia* trembles to see such horrible appearances of DEATH, only think what they must feel who endure it! However, compassionating your timorous disposition, I shall shew you but one instance

stance more of the death of the ungodly; after which I shall endeavour to recompense your pain by more pleasant discoveries. I mean, I shall discover unto you some of the godly, with their latter end. In the mean while, let us attend the disconsolate *Lesbia* in her departing agonies.

THIS said, he led me away to a magnificent apartment, decorated with all the productions of art. In this apartment, brilliant as it was, we saw a lady, whom all the riches of the east could not make happy; she lay on a bed of down, surrounded with hangings of damask, it is true, but found no more rest than if she had lain on a flinty rock; she was under the power of an inveterate malady, and had been so for several years; but greatly added thereunto by murmuring at, and repining under the afflictive dispensation. She seemed to me to be about thirty-five years of age, and had been possessed of a goodly measure of external beauty, before it was blasted by this inveterate evil; so that, whilst a maiden, she was what we commonly call a genteel lady; and whatever qualifications *Teresa* could boast of,

were all to be found in the youthful *Letitia*. In her affliction, which was indeed grievous, being a cancer in the breast, she greatly envied the happiness of her visitors, purely because they enjoyed health, the loss of which she inconsolably lamented, and instead of receiving the visits of her friends with that grateful civility, which might have been expected from a person of her rank and education, reduced to such distressing circumstances, she was used to give it them in some such terms as these:

IT is well for you; you can go abroad at your pleasure, and visit your friends, and with them partake of the sweetness of life. You may make much of it now, for you have all the genteel amusements to yourselves; as for me, I know not what evil I have committed more than others, that I should be imprisoned in this solitary place, to endure such racking pains as I do. I hear of many who have lived far more liberal than ever I did, who still continue to enjoy all the pleasures which either town or country can afford; but I must lie here on this infome bed, and nobody knows when

when I shall be able to go abroad, so much as to take an airing, or to see one friend or another. I employ the best physician in the county; but how it is, I know not, he can cure others, but all his prescriptions seem to be lost upon me. It was thus she entertained her friends, and thus she rendered herself disagreeable to all that came near her.

A godly minister in the neighbourhood was used occationally to visit her, though his company was never very desirable, his conversation being by far too serious for a lady of her disposition of mind. Her elevated station, and the known precariousness of her temper, long deterred him from dealing so faithfully with her as he desired; but at last he greatly offended, by telling her, that she ought to consider herself as a dying woman, who must soon give an account of all her actions to a just and impartial God, whose sentence cannot possibly be evaded. He faithfully told her, that she must be regenerated by the spirit of God, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ, before she had any reason to expect that her death would be comfort-

ability. He told her, that unless she was renewed by the Holy Ghost, no regard would be paid at the great tribunal to her elevated station in life; for only those in every nation who fear God and work righteousness shall be saved; for the Lord God, said he, is no respecter of persons.

By this seasonable advice, and salutary instruction, the good *Philanthropos* incurred her ladyship's displeasure so far, that she would never after gratefully receive a visit from him, but was always sullen and out of temper in his company.

THUS venerable *Verax* turned himself to me, and thus he said: *Letitia* was a fine gentlewoman, a descendant of a right honourable and illustrious family, genteel and handsome in the graces of her person, and by birth intitled to an ample fortune. Her noble parents, with all imaginable tenderness, from her earliest days, indulged her to the last degree; they never cared to cross her inclinations, or restrain her humour, however extravagant; by which means she became imperious and haughty, a perfect humourist in her temper. From

her

her youth upward she was inured to all the vanities of the town, the park, the playhouse, and the opera, were as familiar to her as her bed-chamber, and well she knew how to act her part in every polite entertainment. Her beauty, rank, and fortune, brought a noble earl lawfully to her bed, about the age of twenty-one. Being commended wife, she abated nothing of the pleasures to which she had devoted herself, but added very considerably thereunto, by receiving and returning many useless and unprofitable visits, until the fatal time on which she was visited by this malignant evil, which is indeed the forerunner of her death; and then she was out of temper with every body who came near her. Husband, children, and servants, all shared in her anger. *Lesbia*'s beauty was esteemed more than eastern pearls; she vainly imagined that the diamond lost its brilliance when her eyes deigned to glance upon it; the damask rose its liveliness, when compared to her more lively cheek, and the coral she supposed to yield all its perfection, and owed itself undone when her mellifluous and pleasant lips were unmasked. But poignant pain, and frequent sickness, greatly

adapting her adored beauty, surprisingly added to her affection. So long as her strength would admit, she was wont to try them features in the looking-glass oftener than once a day; but how the faithful mirror was charged with falsehood, and bore the weight of her indignation, is not worth your while to hear, or mine to relate.

O, Sir, said I, methinks that on all our *looking-glasses* this motto, MEMENTO MORI, ought to be written, and a DEATH's head fixed on the top of every frame; for even beauties, who delight to gaze upon looking-glasses, meet with no reprieve from DEATH.

THAT son of *Melpomene*, who so judiciously hath drawn the portraiture of the grave, represents beauty as not one whit more grateful to the worms than deformity, and as certainly their feast. If you please, sir, I shall recite the passage to you as it is not very long.

"Beauty! thou pretty play-thing! dear deceit!
"That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,
"And gives it a new pulse unknown before!
"The grave discredits thee; thy charms expung'd,

"Thy

"Thy roses fade, and thy lilies foil'd!
"What hast thou more to boast of? will the lovers
"Flock round thee now to gaze and do thee homage?
"Methinks I see thee with thy head low laid,
"Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheeks,
"The high-fed worm in lazy volumes roll'd,
"Riots unfear'd. For this was all thy caution?
"For this thy painful labours at the glass?
"T'improve those charms, and keep them in repair,
"For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul feeder!
"Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,
"And leave as keen a relish on the sense."

BLAIR.

ACCORDING to the doctrine of this solemn bard, sir, every time that the beautiful lady tries her graces in the glass, she should reflect how the worms will one day burrow in her cheeks, and her eyes become the nauseous habitation of lothsome insects; that she shall then be on a level with the meanest beggar who ranges the streets of the metropolis, and yield no higher relish, though fed with turtle, to the worms, than the miscreant who keeps life in his body by mouldy bread, and the garbage of the kitchen, scarcely procured by lowly cringes, and the most fervent intreaties.

Ay, said *Verania*, Mr. *Blair* may sing in that solemn strain, till he break the strings of his lyre, before the beaux and belles of our day are likely to mind what he says, for, to this day, it hath been at the peril of any servant or attendant whatsoever, to tell *Lucia* that her looks are altered; nor hath her physician and surgeon ever dared to tell her that her disease is incurable. Full of pain indeed is the unhappy lady; but she languisheth out her time in murmuring and repining at the sad dispensation, and envying the happiness of others.

My guide finishing here, I thought in my dream that her physician entered the chamber, and, feeling the lady's pulse, she asked him, if he thought there were any hopes of her recovery? The doctor replied, "I am afraid, madam, there is "not." Then she fell into a fit of visible discontent, and sinfully uttered many things against the ways of the Almighty; and continued, to her last, charging him with inequality.

THE time of her departure being come, I saw terrible sights; her life having been spent in gaiety and madness, her last end was without honour; for no sooner was the unhappy soul driven forth from the once delicate body, now the vanquished prey of relentless Death, than she was seized by the cruel messengers of destruction, and forcibly dragged to appear at the equitable bar of *pride-reviling* God; from whence, as a just reward of her unholy life, she was sent bound hand and foot to be cast into utter darkness, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched; there she wept, she wailed, and gnashed her teeth. There she found many of her former companions; but, alas! their wonted mirth was departed, and horrid despair sat lowering on every countenance; whilst the convulsive bowels of ever-dismal hell rolled her impetuous billows upon them, and every single sense drank in the unutterable torment.

THUS miserable end of *Letitia* thus surveyed, I cried out, O God! who hath hardened himself against thee, and hath prospered? If a self-adoring Pharaoh say,

"Who-

"Who is the Lord, that I should obey "him?" Thou hast a Red-sea in which he and his hosts shall be drowned. If an haughty Nebuchadnezzar lay in his heart, "This is great Babylon which I have built "for the house of my kingdom, and for "the glory of my majesty;" the heart of a beast shall be given to him, and he shall eat grass like the oxen in the field; and if a God-forgetting lady shall spend her life in the pursuit of transitory pleasures, the sequel shall prove, that she has been dead to God whilst she lived to herself.

THEN turning to my guide, I said, I perceive, sir, that DEATH is no respecter of persons, knoweth no distinctions, can neither be bribed nor moved by intreaty, much less can be resisted by power. No, no, replied, *Verario*, DEATH cannot be intreated, is an utter enemy to mercy, and a perfect stranger to distinctions; the majestic prince, and the rustic peasant; the noble earl, and his servile groom; the amiable lady, and the scorched cook-maid are equally the same to his indiscriminating shaft; all distinctions vanish in the grave, that common receptacle of rich and poor.

Noble and ignoble, beauteous and unseemly, old and young, the lordly prelate and famished curate, prince and peasant, all ranks and degrees of men meet here on a common level; in this respect, one end happeneth unto all men. People of distinction too often desire no other heaven besides the vain and fantastic pleasures of life, little considering that ere long they must bid adieu to sublunary enjoyments; and the most high God hath fixed it as an invariable maxim, that the desire after, must precede the enjoyment of heaven. Hence, no desires after the future enjoyment of God being possessed in this life, it is not rationally to be expected, that they can enter into the celestial felicity at their death.

THESE earthly gods, continued *Veratio*, are much dissatisfied if they receive not a great degree of homage from their inferiors in life; but, believe me, nothing is more common than for them at death to stand trembling under the force of self-conviction, before the judgment-seat of the King of Kings, who hath declared himself to be no respecter of persons.

THEN,

THEN, said I, woe is me for my fellow creatures! into what destruction has sin involved them! How few, alas! are they who know the things which make for their eternal peace, before they be for ever hid from their eyes? Unhappy, most emphatically unhappy indeed are they, whose only heaven consists of glittering dust, and whose bliss is composed of the empty honours and wretched pleasures of this seducing and bewitching world. Let honours in the highest degree be imposed upon me, and let me enjoy all that men call happiness; what will it profit if my soul must be banished, for ever banished, from the amiable presence of my God? Can these, *Veratio*, ever be deemed an ample compensation for the loss of God, in his divine excellencies and glorious subsistences? A lean, an empty heaven indeed it must be, where this is wanting. O, my soul, let thy delights for ever be attracted by the refined, the sublime pleasures of our holy religion! and thou, my heart, look down with indifference upon all those sneries which worldlings so much admire!

PART IV.

HAVING thus spoken, I thought my guide, the good *Veratia*, led me from this to another apartment in the oppolite lide of this ſtately building; and, as we entered the apartment, I heard a perſon, with a mournful tone of voice, thus expreſs himſelf; *Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage, a few days and full of ſorrows.* What is the meaning of this, ſaid I, this is a ſtranger kind of ſaying. To which he replied, you will underſtand this better hereafter. When we were entered the chamber, I ſaw a grave man of advanced years, who ſeemed to be in great diſtreſs both of body and mind; and thus he addreſſed ſome of his friends, who it ſeems had been endeavouring to comfort and ſtrengthen him on the proſpect of diſſolution.

O my friends, you little know what a sinner I have been! let sinners of highest rank be thought of, and I assure you I am worse than all; yea, I am the very chief of sinners; the vilest and most unworthy creature in the world. O! how justly doth the Lord afflict me now! he leaves me not comfortless in my last trials without dreadful provocations: such provocations as make my very heart bleed to think of them: justly, alas! am I left to the scourge of an evil conscience, and made an instance of the terrible displeasure of an offended God. O what innumerable mercies have I enjoyed at his hand! but such hath been the depravity of my nature, the sinfulness and rebellion of my life, that I have grossly abused and trampled them all under my feet; and what can I now expect, but to be for ever banished from the presence of him whose goodness I have so grossly abused, and against whom I have most ingratefully sinned. I tremble to think of enduring his displeasure; but, if I must endure it, I know it is my desert, and in my condemnation I will confess him righteous, for I, only I, have destroyed myself.

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O my

Here he was stopped by excess of grief, which vented itself in a flood of tears, and one of his friends who sat by him thus replied. My dear friend, I am exceedingly surprised to hear you lay such heavy accusations against yourself; you charge yourself with the worst and baseft of crimes; whereas all we, your friends and acquaintance, who have been the witnesses of your conduct, are fully convinced, that ever since you made a profession of religion, your whole conversation hath been unblameable, and becoming true godliness.

To which the sick man replied. O my friend! it is that, it is that which grieves me now! O how it pains me to think that people who could only see my outside appearance, took me to be somewhat, when, alas! my own heart all along told me, that I was nothing. Even now, the discovery of the pride and hypocrisy of my heart is a burden intolerable to me. I would fain have been sincere, it is true, and I often thought that I strove for it; but, O wretched and miserable creature that I am! I never could attain it. Sometimes formerly, I flattered myself that I was

I was one of the Lord's people; but now the disguise is taken off, and I am convinced that I have been, and still am, an enemy to all real righteousness, an utter stranger to the heart-purifying religion of the holy Jesus.

O now it grieves me, to think how I have imposed upon the church of Christ, where I have only been an intruder, a vile tare growing up among the Lord's wheat, a filthy goat amongst the innocent sheep of the Redeemer! but now it is my greatest fear, that I shall be for ever separated from both him and them.

HERE he was again stopped by the anguish of his spirit, and after a few minutes, another friend of his, in a spirited manner, replied, my dear brother, this is only a temptation of the enemy, and such, I trust, ere long you will find it to be. It hath pleased the Lord to withdraw from you for a moment, and for holy ends, to leave you to the buffetings of satan; but, believe me, believe God himself, he will return with mercy and salvation, and with everlasting loving-kindness he will gather you.

you. What though your sins are great, the merit of the Redeemer's sacrifice is infinitely greater; what though the cry of them reach even to the heavens, his precious atonement surmounts them all; yea, although they are of a scarlet or crimson stain, the blood of Jesus the Son of God, shall wash you and make you white as wool, or the whiter snow. Satan is indeed permitted, as the accuser of the brethren, to load your conscience with heavy accusations; but yet a very little while, and the base accuser shall be cast down; he shall be trampled for ever under your feet.

Let my friend consider the many great and precious promises which are made to the *poor in spirit*, the *weary and heavy laden*, the *captive*, the *broken-hearted sinner*, the *hungering and thirsting soul*, the *mourner for sin*, &c. these are the names and characters of the Redeemer's people, and all these meet together in my brother, which is to us, though not to yourself, an evident token of your adoption by grace into the elect family. Had he not loved you, he would never have put his own seal upon

you;

you; had he not chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, you could never thus have groaned under the depravity of your nature; and having loved you, it is with an everlasting love, a love which never can alter, but is sure to endure to the end. How can my brother sink whilst the arm of everlasting love is underneath him? Or perish whilst the eternal God is his refuge? O my friend! think of the above characters of the redeemed, and try if you find not some of them belonging to yourself.

He ceased here, and the sick man with a trembling voice, replied: I thank you, my dear sir, in the most grateful manner, for your tender care for my welfare; but, alas! I can see nothing in me that looks in the least like to the character of the Redeemer's people. I see no promise in the Bible that belongs to me; for a word of promise would be a comforting stay to my sinful soul, now in my last distress. It is true, that many times in my life, the trouble of my mind hath been alleviated by such considerations as you propose; but now I am a dying man, ready to land

upon

upon a dark eternity, and cannot draw rational conclusions from such considerations. O eternity! eternity! nothing can make me look into eternity with pleasure, or render DEATH in any wise comfortable, but a sensible manifestation of my interest in the death and resurrection of Christ, the Spirit himself bearing witness with my own spirit that I belong to, and am born of God. The pain of dying is nothing when compared with the pangs of soul that I feel in looking forward to a dreadful futurity: I may now say in the language of the Psalmist, *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water spouts, all thy waves and billows are gone over me. I sink in deep waters, wherein there is no standing.* I know, my friends, you would have me trust in God and apply the promises to myself; and gladly I would, but I find that I can as soon remove mountains, and cast them into the sea, as trust and believe in God with an appropriating faith. He hideth himself from me, and how shall I discern him? O that I knew where I might find him! I would come with Job even to his seat, and spread my complaint before him; but alas! he covereth himself

with

with darkness, and will not admit of my approaches to him; I press forward, but cannot find him; I look back to past experience, but can see no track of his Spirit's work; I turn me to the right hand and left, but can perceive nothing at all of him. On the contrary, I am environed with devils, and my own sins, which are more dreadful to me than all the infernal tribes: these only do separate betwixt God and me.

I THOUGHT that here the poor man's words were a third time interrupted with the agitation of his grief, and he shed abundance of tears: his friends prayed with and for him, fervent and much distressed they seemed to be in prayer, every one imitating the conduct of the wrestling patriarch, when at Penuel. They likewise reasoned with him concerning the immutability of divine love, the infinite value of the blood of Christ, the certainty of the promises of the covenant, the wise ends which God might have in withdrawing from him in his calamity, the assurance which the scriptures give us of the Holy Spirit finishing his work in the souls of his people,

and

and the confirmed malice of the implacable tempter. They likewise expressed their hope that the Lord would yet appear for him in a way of consolation, before he would take him down into the dark valley of the shadow of death; but, if it should be otherwise, they were assured of his landing safe on the shore of felicity; thus all their endeavours seemed to be fruitless, for he still persisted in his belief that the righteous God had, in strict justice, cast him off, as unworthy of a place among his chosen ones.

I now turned to my guide with disdain on my countenance, and thus addressed him: Ah, sir, what a wretched deceiver this man must have been in his life-time, that he is thus given up to the scourge of an evil conscience at his death! O! it is a fearful thing thus to play the hypocrite with God.

To which my guide, with some warmth, replied: I told you before, *Neanio*, that you must not always judge of a man's estate according to the outward appearance of things. This man, whom you so rashly censure

cenſure as a deceitful hypocrite, is the good *Humilius*: ſo far from being what you apprehend, that he is one of the precious ſons of Zion, a faithful diſciple of the Redeemer, and a ſpecial favourite of Jehovah, whoſe ways are in the deep waters, and whoſe judgments are unſearchable. Few have equalled this venerable ſaint for fervour of ſpirit and ſanctity of life, and few have drank ſo deep of the heavenly Spirit of the immaculate Jeſus as he; notwithſtanding he is thus tried like ſilver in the furnace. Whilſt health and vigour attended *Humilius*, he was bleſſed with a greater than ordinary diſcovery of his own ſinfulneſs, both in the root and in the fruit; and he was one of the very few who daily grieve under a ſenſe of the pollutions of their depraved hearts, and conſequently under a ſenſe of the defilement and imperfections of their beſt ſervices. This diſcovery greatly tended to leſſen his comfort and joy, ſo that he ſeldom had thoſe elevations of ſpirit which ſome are favoured with, but at the ſame time it had an happy tendency to make him extremely careful of all his proceedings. His conſcience was affected with the lighteſt touch of ſin, and

ſmote

smote him even for an unsanctified thought. He retained such a sense of sin, that he was always low and mean in his own esteem. Saying with those ancient worthies, "So "foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a "beast before thee; I am a worm and no "man, a reproach of men, and have not "the understanding of a man." Contrary to the practice of many professors, he accounted himself the unworthiest of all, utterly unworthy of a place in the church of Christ. On the other hand, his fellow Christians looked on him as a man of exemplary piety, holy and unrebukable in his conversation in the church, and in the world, patient in tribulation, fervent and instant in prayer, desiring not his own, but the glory of God; not his own, so much as the good of the church of Christ.

THIS unexpected account of *Humilis* greatly amazed me, and made me more solicitous to know what the event might be.

THEREFORE I addressed my guide in the following manner: Venerable sir, I readily acknowledge my error, and humbly beg

your pardon for my foolish censure; and I pray you would signify your forgiveness by informing me, whether it is possible for such, as you have described *Humilius* to be, to be cast off by the Almighty, and perish at last. To which I thought *Veratio* replied: No, *Novitio*, it cannot possibly be that such a one can perish, for there are none but the regenerated who can answer the description which I have given of the good *Humilius*; and any one may know, that none are regenerated but those who are the objects of God's special love; that all those he loves with an everlasting love, he loves to the end; therefore, however dark he may be with regard to union with, and interest in, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him in the love of God, it is not possible that he can be lost. These are dark paths, *Novitio*, through which *Humilius* is led; nevertheless they are sure paths, and lead directly to the kingdom of light: and let me tell you, he is led even now by the fountain of light himself, notwithstanding he seems to be blind to any sense of his leader's presence. His patience under his affliction, his resignation to the divine will, with respect

to bodily pain, his abhorrence of himself on account of sin, and his justifying the ways of God, together with his earnest desire after forgiveness and acceptance, are so many evidences of his interest in the love of God, though at present he can see none of them.

Sir, said I, permit me to ask you another question, for I am born to be troublesome. Can there be any reasons assigned, why the Lord should suffer some of his dearest saints to fall into such desertion and distress in their latest hours?

Yes, *Novitio*, said he, some reasons may be assigned why it should sometimes be so; but want of love in God to their persons, want of tenderness in the Redeemer, can never be justly thought to be the reasons for it: but God hath holy ends to answer by every part of his procedure, and no doubt by this dispensation also. I suppose that one end, which he may propose by the troubles of good *Humilius*, may be, to stir up his professing people to double their diligence in the use of all appointed means, thereby to make their calling and election sure to

themſelves; that when they arrive at their lateſt hours, they may be exempted from thoſe ſpiritual conflicts which they ſee others exercied with. Ah, but, ſir, ſaid I, how is it that the Lord maketh choice of thoſe who are moſt eminent in holineſs, to endure thoſe afflictions which are deſigned for the edification and improvement of their ſurviving brethren?

VERATIO replied, There is no neceſſity that I know of, *Novimo*, for you to aſk a reaſon for the proceedings of the Almighty; nevertheleſs the difficulty here doth vaniſh, when it is conſidered, that for the Moſt High to chooſe, for ſuch purpoſes, perſons whoſe conduct hath been leſs guarded, would not anſwer the ſame end. We naturally expect that profeſſors, who are unguarded in their conduct, and remiſs in the known duties of religion, will find hard work of it on a death-bed, which will be no leſs troubleſome to them than if they lay upon pointed flints; ſo that, although the party himſelf may at laſt be ſaved, it is through fiery temptations and grievous afflictions. But when Chriſtian people behold a perſon of the moſt circum-

ſpect

ſpect and conſcientious converſation, ſpringing from principles of the moſt eminent piety, mourning after an abſent God, and lamenting his ſins, which all the world beſides himſelf are ſtrangers to, it naturally tendeth to ſtir up each to ſelf-examination, and to conſider his own ways. The learned *Fleming* relates a ſtory of a northern worthy who had been, in diverſe caſes, favoured with an extraordinary diſcovery of the mind and will of God, who, when he came to a death-bed, called his friends to him, and thus addreſſed them: *O my friends! I find it a great matter to be a real Chriſtian, and unrebukable before God. I declare to you, that ſuch hath been my ſupport for the ſpace of ten years by-paſt, that God hath not been out of my thoughts as long at once, as one might go to the Croſs and come again (which might be done in ten minutes) unleſs I have been aſleep or about buſineſs, and after all, I aſſure you, that I am even now at the very brink of deſpair.*

ANOTHER end which God may have in view, perhaps, may be, to remove the carnal confidence which his own people are too prone to have, in the grace which they

have already received. In ſome frames inſtead of ſtudying to be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt, they are ſtrong in that which is implanted in themſelves. Vainly imagining that they can overcome the ſevereſt trial in the ſtrength thereof. With an ancient profeſſor, when he ſtood on a place ſlippery enough, they ſay, *My mountain ſtands ſtrong, I ſhall never be moved*; not conſidering that the Chriſtian's conqueſt depends not on the grace which he hath already received, but on freſh ſupplies communicated in the time of need, from him in whom it hath pleaſed the Father that all fulneſs ſhould dwell. All fulneſs dwelling in Jeſus naturally ſuppoſes that there is nothing but emptineſs in the creature, and that therefore the ſublime exerciſe of Chriſtian faith conſiſts in a conſtant reliance upon *God in Chriſt*, for mercy to pardon every ſin, and for grace to help in every time of need.

Now when Chriſtian people behold the greateſt of ſaints labouring in the dark, under the ſevereſt buffetings and ſharpeſt conflicts of ſoul, it naturally tends to make them ſuſpect their ſuppoſed ſtrength, and

to

to exercise themselves in an habitual reliance upon God. And, seeing their need of fresh supplies of grace, how naturally are they led by such dispensations to the inexhaustible fountain of all fulness, for strength proportioned to their day of difficulty and trial; and especially for large supplies in their death-bed trials, because very often they are found to be the greatest; and well it is that the Lord is pleased by any means to teach his people to live upon himself.

But come, *Novitio*, and I will discover to you the immediate cause of the sorrow of good *Humilius*.

This said, the venerable *Veratio* anointed my eyes with his precious eye-salve, and in an instant I discerned a deformed fiend couching close by the side of *Humilius*, and whispering him in the ear; and, at every sigh which the good man made through the pressure of his grief, the malicious *fury* smiled a most ghastly grin. But giving a close attention to this *evident-darkener*, I perceived a chain harder than adamant around his middle, the end of which was secure in the hand of a ma-

jeſtic perſon, who ſhone brighter by far than the ſun in his ſtrength; by which I ſaw, that although it may pleaſe the Almighty ſometimes to permit Satan to diſturb the minds of his choſen ones, he never ſuffers him to deſtroy them; and that Satan can go no further than permitted by the divine Redeemer.

LEARN from hence, *Novitio*, ſaid *Verazio* to me, that the ſame enemy who allures to ſin, whilſt in health and proſperity, will, if permitted, tempt to deſpair in a ſtate of ſickneſs and adverſity. And be you, yea let every Chriſtian be thankful that Satan is ever kept under a ſuitable reſtraint by the power of Almighty God, otherwiſe feeble mortals muſt of neceſſity ſink under his great ſuperiority.

HERE my guide ceaſed, and, as I thought, the good *Humilius* for the laſt time opened his mouth and ſaid; ever ſince I knew any thing of religion, flying to Chriſt has been my laſt reſource. I am now dreadfully oppreſſed with the weight of my ſins, but whither ſhall I fly for help, but to the mercy of that God againſt whom

whom I have ſinned? He only hath the words of eternal life. There is none in the heavens above, none upon the earth below, that can help me but He: as it has been in my life-time, ſo it is now, this is my laſt reſource; I die if I truſt him not, I can but die if I truſt in him; therefore I will proſtrate my ſoul at the foot of his throne, and there will I ſue for mercy; if I periſh, I periſh! and if I ſhould, as I deſerve, be ſpurned from his preſence, it ſhall be relying on his own blood and righteouſneſs, for there is ſalvation in none other.

HAVING uttered theſe words, with the dying rattle in his throat, his ſpeech failed, to the great grief of his godly acquaintance, ſome of whom ſaid, Alas! leſt this ſhould be a means of turning the lame out of the way. One thing I beheld pleaſed me mightily, which was this, the moment that good *Humilius* ceaſed to ſpeak, the majeſtic perſon that I ſpoke of, who ſhone ſo gloriouſly, gave the chain, wherewithal the fury was bound, a ſevere twitch, and obliged him to leave the good man to his reſt; which ſo enraged the ſqualid infer-

nah, that he growled most horribly, and in anguish gnawed the adamantine chain; then disappeared, and I saw him no more.

In the mean while my benevolent guide, by some supernatural means, opened my ears that I could hear, and in some measure understand the language of spirits, which I no sooner perceived, than with all diligence I attended to what now passed with the good *Humilus*; in whose concerns I found myself by this time deeply interested. As I listened, I heard the Almighty, who but a little before seemed to stand upon mount Sinai, surrounded with clouds of darkness, and horrible tempest, now speak from mount Zion in a still small voice, and said to the speechless man, *I have loved thee with an everlasting and immutable love, therefore I have drawn thee by dark paths to myself; yea, I have caused thee to pass under the rod, and have brought thee into the bond of the covenant. The way which I led thee thou knowest not, but I have made crooked places straight before thee, and rough places smooth; thy warfare is now accomplished, and I have bruised Satan for ever under thy feet.*

THE dying man no sooner felt the blessed effects of the well-known voice of God, than in an extasy of joy he mentally replied, *My Lord, and my God!* Now DEATH, do thy worst; come as soon as thou wilt, thou awful skeleton, for now thou art welcome. Now my Lord is returned with loving-kindness, I can with pleasure enter thy cold embrace, and repose my flesh in thy gloomy mansions. Hasten thy pace, thou tardy executioner, cut short thy work, thou friendly enemy. I long to enjoy the beatific vision of him who loved me, and washed me in his blood.

I SAW in my dream, that guardian angels descended from heaven in blazing squadrons, to attend the dismission of this sanctified soul, and to guard her passage to the celestial world. As the good *Humilius* ceased to breathe, the attending angels clapped their wings for joy, that one more of the chosen race had passed through the *glory-birth*, that one more of the elect charge was safely gathered home: with holy fervour they saluted the glorious spirit, and bid her welcome into the undisturbed rest of their splendid society. She thankfully received

received their pure careſſes, and ſtruck with wonder and aſtoniſhment at unſpeakable grace, ſhe inſtantly mixed her melodious voice with thoſe warbling chorriſters her companions, who ſung the moſt delightful ſong that ever ear attended to. I thought I could diſcern the glorious notes of ſweet deliverance from the lips of the newly departed ſoul, in a key more exalted than the reſt. O with what pleaſure did I liſten to the ſolemn ſong of one who ſo very lately was languiſhing in deep diſtreſs!

O VERATIO, cried I, what blinded creatures we mortals are! The glories of heaven blaze all around us, and yet we perceive not in the leaſt their illuſtrious ſplendour.

HAVING ſung the noble anthem, to diſtinguiſhing love and unfruſtrable grace, they ſtretched their brilliant pinions, and ſwift as thought ſhot through the vault of heaven towards the regions of eternal felicity. As ſoon as they arrived in the empyrean plain, I beheld innumerable companies of the celeſtial hoſts in their long, their glorious and refulgent garments, with

crowns

crowns of gold upon their heads, and triumphant palms in their hands, come in bright procession to the golden gates of the New Jerusalem, to congratulate the soul on her safe arrival in the glorious world, and in triumph to conduct her up to the throne of God. As they passed along through the streets of paradise, which were all paved with diamonds and topazes, the departed *Humilius* was often saluted by his former companions in warfare, who greatly rejoiced that his course of pilgrimage was finished, and the time of his coronation come. In their bright procession from the golden gates of the holy city up to the JASPER THRONE, shouts of loud joy and peals of rapturous triumph burst from each tongue, and made all the celestial arches ring in concert with their elevated voices.

I THOUGHT I saw the blessed, the ever-adorable Jesus descend from the midst of the throne, and meeting *Humilius*, embraced him with tender affection; he also called upon the excellent *Theophilus*, under whose ministry *Humilius*, it seems, had had been savingly converted, and let him know that now another diamond must be

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added to his crown, as another of the children whom God had given to his faithful ministry was happily arrived. Then he took *Humility* by the hand, led him up to the all-glorious throne, and to Him who sat in the most majestic state thereon, he said, *Most holy Father, behold this darling object of thy love and choice, this subject of redemption is safely arrived in thy more immediate and most joyous presence, being fully prepared for it by the divine influence of the Holy Ghost. Let him now possess the mansion which hath so long been prepared for him, and enjoy the rest unto which he was predestinated.*

Then He who sat on the throne thus bespoke the soul, *Come, my beloved one, receive the joys which I have prepared for thee, and the glory unto which I appointed thee; for I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and by my special care of thee I have drawn thee to my glory.*

Then the records of eternity were all laid open before him, and now being blest with the beatific vision, he could read every line therein which related to his own state either

either in time or in eternity. And oh, how great was the wonder of the ſoul! How inflamed was her gratitude, when ſhe ſaw every circumſtance attending her pilgrimage, was unalterably fixed in the decrees of God, which are ſo dark and difficult unto us in the church below! With holy amazement ſhe beheld, that the whole chain of providential events flowed from and centered in the love of God to her in the perſon of Chriſt. Silent no longer could ſhe ſit, but her wonder broke forth in rapturous ſongs of ceaſeleſs praiſes, in concert with all the redeemed hoſts, who now, in the fervour of unutterable love, ſtruck the golden harp and ſung reſponſive to the trembling wire.

HAVING followed *Humilius* thus far, *Veratio* ſpoke to me, and lo! the viſion was withdrawn; but left ſome impreſſions on my mind which I truſt will never be eraſed. Being at laſt capable of a little reflection, after my aſtoniſhment was abated, I could not help thinking of the infinite difference betwixt theſe who die in the Lord, and thoſe who die in their ſins: the latter being precipitately plunged into the fearful abyſs

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of dark and ever-burning hell, where the worm dieth not; whereas the former are immediately transported on angelic wings, from a land of sin and many sorrows, into the more immediate presence and ineffable light of the *ever Blessed Three*, to partake of all the joys of the *undivided One*. Then I said, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.*

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PART

PART V.

AS I was ruminating on theſe things, I thought that my guide called me away, ſaying we may yet ſee DEATH attended with very different circumſtances; and although I thought myſelf by the laſt ſcene fully repaid for all the terror I had undergone at the beginning of my acquaintance with *Verario*, I found myſelf inſpired with the moſt eager deſire to have farther diſcoveries of ſanctified DEATH. I followed him with the greateſt eagerneſs out of this chamber, wherein I had viewed ſuch an agreeable ſcene, into another apartment adjacent to it, and there he ſhewed me an happy diſciple, who with great compoſure of mind was laid on a ſick bed, under the preſſure of heavy affliction. Calm and ſerene in the midſt of tempeſtuous trouble; in the midſt of trying ſorrow his patience

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ſtood unmoved, even as the ſtately oak lifts up its lofty head, deſpiſing the weſtern tempeſt; or as the ſtable rock, amidſt the furious ſurges, endures their wrathful diſcharge without the leaſt emotion. Rent with racking pain, and oppreſt with deathly ſickneſs, he patiently, though with a trembling voice, ſaid, Good is the Lord's will concerning me! the cup that my heavenly father hath mingled for me, ſhall I not patiently drink it? I thought in my dream that he was thus addreſſed by one of his friends; Sir, I would have you repoſe yourſelf a little, for your afflictions are very heavy; and notwithſtanding your ſpirit is ſubmiſſive, your fleſh muſt needs be weak. To which he replied, My afflictions are all known to the Lord, yea it is my God who hath fixed the degree of them; and ſeeing the Almighty is pleaſed to do it, I dare not, I cannot complain, for I am well aſſured that he can do nothing wrong. Were it not right, he could not do it, *omnipotent* as he is. My afflictions indeed make this clay-tabernacle to totter, but are lighter than nothing when put in the balance with my ſins. I well know they might be infinitely greater, and yet

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my God be a just God. But mercy and tender compassion guides his hand even when he smites, and his bowels yearn when he mingles a bitter cup for any of us. I am fully perswaded that he will lay no more upon me himself, nor suffer others to lay any more upon me, than he will support me under; for the Lord is very pitiful and full of mercy even to me, though I deserve nothing at his hand but to be left to lie down in sorrow. I am therefore altogether easy about the measure of my afflictions.

It was here he stopped, and one of his friends rejoined. My dear sir, how great is the blessing to be thus filled with comfort in the time of your sickness! To which the sick man replied, indeed, my friend, my comforts are far from being so high as you imagine; on the contrary, I assure you that sensible enjoyment runs very low with me at present. But this is the ground of all my confidence, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; he is the rock of my soul, and however my comforts flow, I account them not my Christ. Since it pleased the Lord to visit

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me with this affliction, which I think, is drawing near to a period, I have had many struggles with my own unbelieving heart, and many conflicts with Satan, in regard to my interest in the love of God. But, glory to the Almighty name, the less my feems to be withdrawn, my anchor is within the vail, and my hope is fixed in Immanuel. I myself am a poor helpless worm, and my faith is very tottering, but the rock of my salvation, the object of my faith, can never be shaken. With him there is no variableness, nor so much as the least shadow of a change. I may therefore boldly trust in him, and calmly wait the issue of his providence.

After all, continued he, I must confess, that I have often been indulged with sensible manifestations of divine love, when to my own apprehension I stood less in need of them, than I do now. But O, let me not attempt to correct the proceedings of unerring wisdom! The Lord's ways are the best, and I desire to submit to them: he hath graciously promised, that he will never leave nor forsake me, and I account him faithful who hath promised. I

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bleſs him for his word.—This is the hold into which I fly for ſhelter in the dark and ſtormy day. I would not for all the world be without an intereſt in the above precious promiſes; for I live not now by ſenſe, but by faith, and this affliction hath found a good deal of work for the little faith I have. Believe me, my friends, I have often been obliged, in times of darkneſs and difficulty, to live upon the word of grace, and it has upon the whole been ſpirit and life to my ſoul. I never knew the promiſe to fail, but the word on which he hath cauſed me to hope, hath always been confirmed to me. I have ever found the Almighty to be as good as his word, ever better than my fears ſuggeſted, and infinitely more gracious than my deſerts.

The ſick man being ſpent with ſo much ſpeaking, I thought that he was obliged to ſilence for a ſmall ſpace to recover himſelf. But ſuch was his zeal for the welfare of his friends, that as ſoon as poſſible he ſpake to them as follows.

My dear brethren, in all appearance I am now near, very near my laſt hour, and I tell

I tell you, and beg that you will regard it as the words of a dying man, that the croſs of Chriſt is of excellent uſe in mortifying us to creature-objects. Croſs diſpenſations of Providence, bodily afflictions, and the temptations of Satan are ſuch excellent corroſives, that by the direction and influence of God the Spirit, they prove the deſtruction of ſin in our members. For my own part I declare to you all that I have learned more of God by afflictions, than by all the ſermons that I have ever heard preached.

IT was now that *Peraſto* whiſpered thus to me; I well believe, *Nevillo*, what this good man ſays of his afflictions, for as the fervent fire is to the golden ore, and water to the ſullied linen, ſo are afflictions in the hand of the Spirit of God, to thoſe who are exerciſed with them. Parricide is lawful in no caſe elſe but this; here it is a righteous thing, that afflictions, which are the legitimate offspring of ſin, ſhould firſt curb the power, and at laſt deſtroy the being of their accurſed parent. And for our comfort, let us know that afflictions

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themselves cannot survive the sin which they instrumentally destroy.

In the mean while the dying man continued and said, My dear friends, despise not the chastening of the Lord, resist not affliction with a foolish Pagan bravery; neither murmur, repine, nor faint when you are rebuked by him; for he chasteneth not in anger, neither does he rebuke in hot displeasure. If you are the objects of divine love, you must expect the application of the rod, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you are the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, you must expect in this life to bear the cross, for it is always antecedent to the crown. Without afflictions you do not, you cannot bear the image of the heavenly Jesus, for he was afflicted; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They greatly mistake who hope for Christ here, without afflictions along with him. Our passover is never to be eaten in this world without bitter herbs; therefore that religion which is unconnected with the cross is not the religion of Christ, but of the world. Be

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you assured, my friends, that the way in which no cross is found, must needs be the broad and downward way; for the cross of Christ is the right, the only path-way to the kingdom; and those who despise and reject the cross will find themselves at death deprived of the crown. Here he stopped again, his strength being exhausted, and his silent friends stood with a mournful pleasure around his bed.

After some time, one of them made so free as to ask him, whether he would choose to live or die, on supposition that the Almighty would grant his desire? To which, being a little refreshed, he replied: Indeed, my friend, I cannot tell you; for so far as I know my own heart, which hath all along been a mystery to me, I neither desire life nor death; for me to live is Christ, and for me to die is eternal gain. I know that the Almighty hath numbered my days, and my months are with him; he hath fixed the limits both of my time and of my habitation, so that I cannot pass over them; yea, he hath by an immutable decree appointed the very moment and means of my dissolution. Why then should

ſhould I anxiouſly think or care any thing at all about it? His purpoſes are for ever the ſame, and the thoughts of his heart unto all generations. His council ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure. If I am appointed to death, as I think I am, I truſt he will glorify himſelf in my death; and if it ſhould be that I am appointed to life, he hath wiſdom and power ſufficient to glorify himſelf even by my life. I yield myſelf wholly to his diſpoſal, for the judge of all the earth can never do wrong; living and dying may God be glorified in me.

Here he ceaſed, and his friend with viſible ſympathy rejoined: Happy, my dear brother it is for you to be thus indulged with ſtrength from on high, in the time of your great diſtreſs. But tell me, my friend, if your ſtrength will permit, do tell me, if you have no deſire to live and ſee your wife and children comfortably provided for? Methinks it is a deſirable thing to ſee our children educated in a religious manner, and ſettled agreeably in the world. Theſe things often lie with a diſtreſſing weight upon my mind, and are ties which ſtrongly bind me down to earth,

and from which I sincerely desire to be delivered.

The sick man replied; My dear friend, I must confess to you, that, next to the welfare of the Redeemer's church, my wife and children are dear to me*, and if any thing could now prevail with me to desire a longer sojournment in this valley

* These words of *Stabilius*, "Next to the welfare "of the Redeemer's church, my wife and children "are dear to me," are very remarkable, and ought to be regarded. That he loved his wife and children is evident from what he says both in this place and elsewhere; but however fervent his affection for them might be, it gave place to the love he bore to the Redeemer's church. This evidences the true spirit of Christianity in him, and serves as much to fix his character, as the exalted exercise of his faith; being expressive of the very spirit of that text, Mat. x. 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* If this is to be regarded as a rule, it will fix a lasting stigma upon those professors who are so full of care for themselves and families, that they have neither leisure nor inclination to care for the church of God. These are like withered limbs in the common body; they neither impart, nor receive nourishment: neither are their death-beds likely to be honoured, as that of the good *Stabilius*.

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of ſorrows, it would be the welfare of my dear children, and dearer wife, for they have always been dear to me ever ſince I enjoyed them. Conſulting their welfare, hath formerly been attended with great anxiety; but now I ſee, that in my over-carefulneſs I was far from being ſubmiſſive to the ſovereign pleaſure of an all-diſpoſing God; and as far as lay within my power was for wreſting the diſpenſations of providence out of his unerring hand. Had I done what I could to promote their welfare, and left the iſſue to the Almighty, I had done well: but alas! I could not be eaſy, unleſs I evidently ſaw the iſſue anſwer my deſire. But bleſſed for ever be that God who turneth our hearts as he does the rivers of water; at preſent all anxiety appears to be gone, and my wife and children are no burthen at all to my mind; for I know that the God whom I ſerve will convert the ſtones of the wall into bread, before he will ſuffer the ſeed of the righteous to famiſh *.

* An illuſtrious inſtance of divine regard to the ſeed of the righteous, and care for the widow and fatherleſs, we have in the proviſion made for the numerous family of a worthy miniſter the Reverend Mr. *Burford*, lately deceaſed.

SETTLING my children in the world appeared a very desirable thing before I came to a death-bed, but now I am taught that their settling in the world does not in the least depend on my being present with them; for the determination of Jehovah hath long since divinely gone forth by a firm and unalterable decree, in which all their circumstances, great and minute, are infallibly settled, by the unerring wisdom of him who worketh all things after no other council but that of his *own will*. The life of the sparrow and the dinner of the raven are provided for in his grand decree; yea, the very hairs on our bodies are numbered, coloured, and disposed by unerring wisdom; much more are the bounds of our habitation, and the extent of our possessions, the result of divine appointment. If the Lord is pleased to make my children poor (as it is his prerogative to make poor) how shall my presence with them be able to make them rich? or if he in his sovereign bounty shall be pleased to exalt and make them rich, what circumstances so pernicious as to prevent the execution of his design? Holy and reverend is his name, he disposeth of all creatures and things

things as his wisdom doth direct. By his determination kings reign, and princes decree justice. Races and battles are under his direction; yea, the very turning up of the lot is determined by Jehovah; much more the station and circumstances of his people, and their children. Why then should I desire to interfere in the matter of settling them, to the disquieting of my own mind; for God both can and will bring his purposes to pass without my instrumentality, if he is pleased to take me hence?

THEIR education in religious principles hath been by far the most tender point with me, well knowing the influence which a godly education often has upon the conduct of youth: but this also I am enabled to leave with the Lord. Not from any indifferency towards them, so as to be careless about their welfare in time or eternity; but I have ever been so sensible of my deficiency, in regard to paternal duty, that I often fear my children have been more injured by my imperfections than profited by my precepts and instructions. Besides, I am fully perfuaded that God will be at no loss

for an instrument, when he is about to teach them the knowledge of himself.

Be assured, my friends, that children are not brought one hour sooner to the knowledge of God, on account of their parents life being preserved; but many have, by their parents death, been brought into circumstances by which the Lord has been pleased to lead them into the knowledge of themselves, and the secret of his own immutable love to their persons. Therefore I commit my tender offspring to the protection and grace of him, who has deigned to become the father of the fatherless, and who hath said to men in my condition, *Leave your fatherless children and your widows to me*; I trust his word, and believe that of all guardians he is the most disinterested. My dear *Honora*, my beloved spouse, always hath been dear to me, ever since it pleased the Lord, by his holy ordinance, to make us one; but although she is so dear to me, as that we seemed to possess but one soul, I can with pleasure leave her a few days behind me in this world, notwithstanding it is, and she finds it to be, a world of sin and sorrow. I know that she is an elect vessel,

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a daughter of faithful Abraham, and an heiress according to the promise; and as such she is under divine protection and cannot miscarry. Fear not, my dear *Honora*, fear not the safety of your passage through life. I know that this world is a land of snares, and a hell of pain and sorrow, when compared with the land of pure felicity to which we are bound. It is, and, my dear, you know it to be a land inhabited with implacable enemies to the heaven-born pilgrims, who are passing through it; but let not this discourage my *Honora*, for *he who saved your soul from DEATH, will also preserve your feet from falling. He who hath loved you with an everlasting love, will bear you through all difficulties and dangers, and make you more than conqueror over them all.* It is your God, my love—your husband and friend, who reigns supreme over all creation, who holds the reins of government in his own Almighty hand, and thereby curbeth the enemies of his people at pleasure; so that the most potent of them all cannot lift up his heel against a child of God without his divine permission. He never grants a permission to any of them without a proper limitation; *Hitherto thou*

mayeſt come, is the permiſſion, *but thou ſhalt go no farther*, is the reſtraint: even as Satan obtained leave to deſtroy every thing which belonged to the pious Job, but was prohibited touching his life. Thus it is, that the feebleſt of the Redeemer's flock dwell ſecure from real danger beneath the covert of divine protection.

My dear *Honora*, our great Lord is a huſband to the widow; he is a wiſe director, a rich provider, a powerful protector, and as ſuch he is yours; yours in the ſtrongeſt obligations; yours in time, and to all eternity. The confidence I have in theſe things, makes me willingly reſign the wife of my boſom, and my tender offspring, to the will of that beneficent being, who hath a ſovereign right to diſpoſe of me and mine, as he ſhall ſee moſt for his own glory.

My dear friends and fellow travellers, beware of immoderate care; for you may greatly injure, but never can you thereby profit your children at all. Think not that their ſettlement in the world depends either leſs or more upon you; for when you have cared your laſt for them, the ſove-

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reign ruler will diſpoſe of them juſt as he ſees meet, without ſo much as once conſulting you in the matter. Ah, my brethren, when you lye, as I do now, on a death-bed, you will ſee, that all immoderate carefulneſs ſpringeth immediately from ignorance of and enmity againſt the ways of an holy God. Alas! how many Chriſtian people are woefully perplexed with fruitleſs care all the days of their life, and are thereby prevented of that uſefulneſs which they might otherwiſe be of to the church of Chriſt? Believe me the beſt thing you can do for your children, is ſolemnly and ſeriouſly to dedicate them unto God, leaving them and all their concerns with him. If you do this in good earneſt, by an habitual act, both you and they will reap the advantage of it; yours will be the peace, and theirs will be the profit. Remember what young *Samuel* got by his early dedication.

He ceaſed here, his ſtrength being exhauſted, and after ſome time one of his friends thus addreſſed him: Dear ſir, I cannot perſuade myſelf but a mind thus

ſtayed on the Lord muſt be filled with the moſt joyous tranſport.

To which the good man replied, My mind is compoſed, and calmly fixed on the unalterable word of an ever-faithful God. My peace is ſettled, though my joys are far from being high. It is not on inward frames and feelings that my hope is ſtayed, but on the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant which are in Chriſt, yea and amen to every believer. Inward feelings are indeed extremely pleaſant, but I have not dared for many years to truſt them, for at beſt I have found them fleeting and tranſitory: now enjoyed, dead anon! now like the full-blown roſe my comforts have flouriſhed, immediately ſtripped of all their beauty like the winter vine. Whilſt I lived upon my frames, I was all upon extremes, either raviſhed on the mount of enjoyment, or gone down to do buſineſs in the deep waters. One hour I ſaid, *My mountain ſtands ſure, I ſhall never be moved*; perhaps in leſs than another I ſuppoſed myſelf like *Peter*, ſinking into the boſom of a fatal billow. No ſolidity could I ever find in the frames and diſpoſitions of my own heart:

heart: but I never found the promiſe to fleet, nor the Lord to depart from the word he hath ſpoken. In all my trials his immutable word hath been my ſtay, and on it alone will I lean, when I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death. And thus, in quietly reſting on his word, he will finiſh the ſalvation of my ſoul.

Indeed, if the Lord ſhould be pleaſed to indulge me now with the ſenſible comforts of his felt love, ſhed abroad in my heart by his holy Spirit, it would make this loneſome valley, into which I am entering, by far more delightful, and my paſſage through it abundantly leſs thorny. But if, in his wiſdom, he ſhould ſee meet to with-hold from me ſuch a deſirable meaſure of ſenſible manifeſtation, I bleſs him for his unalterable word, and I bleſs him for ſtrength to rely upon it.

My dear brethren, beware of making to yourſelves a Chriſt of the dying comforts which your holy Redeemer is pleaſed occaſionally to indulge you with. Remember that if his tender concern for your peace and pleaſure induce him to privilege you with the ſheddings abroad of his love in your

your heart, the same tenderness of you will induce him to withdraw his comforts when he sees himself supplanted, and you live upon those comforts rather than upon his person, grace, and righteousness. Remember always that salvation, and the comforts thereof, are two very different things; the fulness of the former being often possessed, where there is but a very small degree of the latter. In my early days of grace I was generally wont to frame to myself notions of the love of God, according to the glimmering twilight of my own mind, and the good or evil frame I found myself to be in; but through rich grace and amazing mercy I have been taught rather to judge thereof by the written word of God, by which I have been piloted through seas of difficulty, when darker sensations have lost sight of shore. And I trust the Holy Ghost will guide me by the said written word, till in his good time he is pleased to land me on the *glory-shore*, and bring me into the more immediate presence of the great THREE-IN-ONE.

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Thus said, he remained silent for a considerable time, and the venerable *Veratio* turned himself to me, and thus accosted me. Now, *Novitio*, you behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. This is the good *Stabilius*, a Christian of the right kind; one who may be called a father in Israel; he can well distinguish between husk and kernel, shadow and substance, truth and error, a faithful one in the household of God. His holy soul can feed upon nothing but what is spiritual and divine; such bread, and such only, as descended from God out of heaven is pleasant to his taste. In his life-time, which hath been an uninterrupted succession of corroding sorrows, the good *Stabilius* could live as well and as satisfactorily upon a word of promise, as some others could do upon a hundred a year. Thus in his life-time he was so happy as to live by faith in the promises, and now he is a dying he is still the same. The word of the Lord is his comfort and stay. But although his unbelief appears to be banished from him, I can tell you it was not always so; for the time was, when under dark dispensations of Providence, he complained

ed with Jacob that all those things were making against him, though now he is better informed. Yea, whatever infidelity we can find in Job, David, Asaph, one part or other of the life of good *Stabilius* hath furnished him with a sad remembrance of theirs; though upon the whole his faith has prevailed gloriously, and I imagine he will never more feel an impulse from unbelief.

Now, *Nevitio*, I have a mind to unfold an amazing scene to you; such a scene as you have never before surveyed. Then he touched my eyes with an eye-salve of divine preparation, and instantly I saw what was extremely amazing; I saw a numerous troop of restless infernals beleaguering the bed of the sick man, which was well defended by a brilliant minister of heaven, divinely superb in his immaterial array. Cleathed with impenetrable armour, the martial guardian waved a flaming sword, with which he kept all the furies of the pit at a proper distance; so that although the most implacable hatred and rage glowed in every breast, they were not able to come near to disturb the mind of *Stabilius*.

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Sometimes they tipped their tongues with falſhood, and accuſed him of the moſt abominable crimes to the guardian, whoſe with holy contempt diſregarded all their clamours. Repulſed in this, they turn their accuſings into the moſt fervent intreaties to the angel, that he would ſcabbard his ſword for a ſeaſon, and allow them the pleaſure of diſtracting the dying man. But the benevolent protector, firm as a rock, remained inflexible to their intreaties, and deaf to their accuſations, reſolving, in obedience to the will of his God, to defend his charge to the laſt extremity. Being thus repulſed, even hell itſelf became hotter within them, and irritated with fierce revenge, they ruſh in fearful numbers againſt the heavenly centinel; and thick as atoms in the ſun-beam, their hiſſing arrows were ſhot againſt him and his beloved charge; but ſkilled in martial encounters, he received their charge, and quenched their fiery darts with his ſhield, with which he alſo covered *Stabilius*. With his brandiſhed falchion, which emitted ſtreams of fire as he waved it, he made the infernal tribe to give back; but filled with indignation, and fired with revenge, they inſtantly rallied

lied their broken force, and returned resolvedly to the charge; and I had the pleasure of observing that as often as they rallied, the heavenly Chieftain put them to the flight. Being indulged with a view of this angelic war, I thought of an ancient saying, *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear him* *; and turning to my guide, I said, O sir, it was well said of that Hebrew prince, who spent his youth in rural employments, *Blessed is the*

* *The angel of the Lord encamps round about those that fear him.* There is a surprising beauty in these words of the Psalmist; as expressive of the highest safety which the most timorous heart can wish for. *He encamps*, with a view to continue in this situation. —*It is around them*, rather than beside them. Beside them would have argued great safety, but encamping *around* implies infinitely more, because every passage is guarded, and no way left for the enemy to give the attack with advantage. Encamps around them, when dangers are most rife, and humanity is most inactive and off its guard.—*around those that fear him*; rather thus expressed in condescension to our unbelieving weakness; the believer being sometimes conscious that he fears God when he dares not conclude that he loves him.—That no room may be left for unbelief to found its arguments upon, the potency of the illustrious protector is pointed out in his character as the angel of the Lord.

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nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. Ah sir, they are well kept whom the Lord doth keep, and the man is blessed whom he thus preserveth. To which *Veratio* replied, Now, *Novitio*, you have had a sight of faithful *Abdiel*, so justly celebrated by the famous *Milton*, for his constant and firm adherence to Immanuel, even when left alone in the camp of rebellious seraphim. There it was,

" That among the faithless, faithful only he;
" Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
" Unshaken, unseduc'd, unterrify'd
" His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
" Nor number nor example with him wrought
" To swerve from truth, or change his constant
" mind
" Though single. From amidst them forth he
" pass'd,
" Long way through hostile scorn, which he sus-
" tain'd
" Superior nor of violence fear'd ought;
" And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd
" On those proud tow'rs to swift destruction doom'd."

Thus, *Novitio*, this faithful guardian nobly retreated from the tents of rebellion, and ere long returns commissioned with the rest of the celestial hosts to fight with the perfidious miscreants in the quarrel of the most

moſt High; and there he diſcovers at once his zeal for his God, and the proweſs of his own martial arms: for when,

"——— Before the cloudy van,
"On the rough edge of battle ere it join'd,
"Satan with vaſt and haughty ſtrides advanc'd
"Came tow'ring, arm'd in adamant and gold;
"Abdiel that ſight endur'd not, where he ſtood
"Among the mightieſt, bent on higheſt deeds,
"——— But from his armed peers
"Forth ſtepping oppoſite, half-way he met
"His daring foe, at this prevention more
"Incens'd, and thus ſecurely him defy'd.

"PROUD, art thou met? thy hope was to have
"reach'd
"The height of thine aſpiring unoppos'd,
"The throne of God unguarded, and his ſide
"Abandon'd at the terror of thy power
"Or potent tongue:
"——— But thou feel'ſt
"All are not of thy train; there be who faith
"Prefer, and piety to God, though then
"To thee not viſible, when I alone
"Seem'd in thy world erroneous to diſſent
"From all my ſect thou feel'ſt; now learn too late
"How few ſometimes may know, when thouſands
"err."

THUS fervent *Abdiel* accoſted the prince of rebels, when they met between the oppoſing

poſſing fronts of the angelic armies on that awful day on which all the hoſts of heaven and hell were drawn forth to battle on the, till then, unſtained field of Æther. And,

" The grand foe, with ſcornful eye aſkance,
" Thus anſwered the faithful Abdiel.
" _____ I'll for thee, but in wiſh'd hour
" Of my revenge, firſt ſought, for thou return'ſt
" From flight, ſeditious angel, to receive
" Thy merited reward, the firſt aſſay
" Of this right hand provok'd, ſince firſt that
" tongue
" Inſpir'd with contradiction durſt oppoſe
" A third part of the Gods, in ſynod met
" Their deities to aſſert.
" _____ But well thou com'ſt
" Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
" From me ſome plume, that thy ſucceſs may
" ſhow
" Deſtruction to the reſt.

" At firſt I thought that liberty and heav'n
" To heav'nly ſouls had been all one; but now
" I ſee that moſt through ſloth had rather ſerve
" Miniſtring ſpirits, train'd up in feaſt and ſong;
" Such haſt thou arm'd the miniſtrelſy of heav'n
" Servility with freedom to contend.
" As both their deeds compar'd this day ſhall
" prove.

" To whom in brief thus Abdiel ſtern reply'd.
" Apoſtate, ſtill thou err'ſt, nor end wilt find
" Of erring, from the path of truth remote:

" Unjuſtly

"Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name
"Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
"Or nature; God and nature bid the same,
"When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
"Them whom he governs.
"Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
"In heav'n God ever blest, and his divine
"Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd;
"Yet chains in hell, not realms expect: mean
"while
"From me return'd, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
"This greeting on thy impious crest receive.

"So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
"Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
"On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
"Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield
"Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge
"He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee
"His mighty spear upstay'd."

Thus, according to the matchless *Milton*, the faithful *Abdiel* first asserted the sovereign right of his God, both by word and deed; and thus he hath continued an invincible hero in the cause of his master, a willing and faithful guardian of his militant children, as you have just now seen in the conflict betwixt him and the infernal brotherhood.

I THOUGHT

I THOUGHT in my dream that I thus replied: I thank you moſt heartily, my dear, my venerable *Veratio*, for this diſcovery, ſo ſtrange and ſurpriſing in itſelf; and I thank you moſt gratefully, dear ſir, for this opportunity of ſeeing the valour of this celebrated angel. But worthy *Veratio*, whoſe delight appears to be to inſtruct the ignorant, I pray you deign to inform me, if it is poſſible that ſuch a war may be maintained around a Chriſtian, and the party himſelf, for whom the ſtrife is, remain unacquainted with it? To which I thought he replied: You may be at no loſs, *Novitio*, to know that the beſt of Chriſtians, even fathers in the Redeemer's family, ſee and know only in part, therefore there may be many things of this kind tranſacted among the immaterial inhabitants of the ſpiritual world without their knowledge. Every Chriſtian may certainly be informed by the volume of revelation in general, that all the angels of God are *miniſtring ſpirits*, ſent forth to miniſter unto them who are appointed heirs of ſalvation; nevertheleſs there are many offices of kindneſs performed by thoſe benevolent ſpirits in behalf of the ſaints, which the moſt intelligent

telligent Chriſtians remain utterly ignorant of, whilſt they ſojourn in this land of ſeparation and ſorrow. As we may ſee in the caſe of good *Stabilius*, he perfectly knows that God is the prime efficient of all his peace and compoſure of mind; but he doth not know that there is a martial ſeraph appointed by the ſovereign of heaven as the guardian of his bed, and protector of his dying moments; nor is he in the leaſt apprehenſive that there is ſuch a ſwarm of reprobate ſpirits ſo near, and ſo earneſtly ſeeking the deſtruction of his mind.

If the militant members of the choſen church could really ſee their ſhining attendants, and underſtand all the ways of the Lord perfectly, they would enjoy the heavenly glories before the appointed time: but the fulneſs of joy, and the manifeſt glories of the redeemed are reſerved for eternity, therefore not to be expected in time. On this account many of the Lord's works are done in the dark, and his ways are involved in thick clouds; ſo that poor purblind mortals cannot diſcern them before they enjoy the light of eternity. And

you

you yourself, *Novitio*, may know that the conflicts betwixt our benevolent protectors the guardian angels, and our enemies of the reprobate race, are not to be seen with bodily eyes, but with the more refined rays of the mind. Bodily eyes discern corporeal objects, but spiritual sight alone can discern spirit.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that towards the dissolution of *Stabilius*, I beheld a squadron of armed seraphs, who were dispatched from the armies in the skies to assist *Abdiel* in the protection of this chosen disciple; who as soon as arrived, and fraternal salutation passed after the angelic manner, they told him that *Jehovah* having, from the throne of his holiness seen, that great numbers of the enemies had assaulted him and his charge, had sent them to his assistance. *Abdiel* thus replied: Welcome, my spotless brethren; welcome are ye now to me, for I have been vigorously attacked, and still the darling infernals are resolute; but through the strength of my God I have preserved my charge inviolate. Come, my brethren, let us prepare for immediate action, for the enemies, though

frequently

frequently repulſed, being now afreſh recruited from hell, are rallying their utmoſt force, and ſoon will return intrepidly to the charge. This ſaid, I perceived that thoſe ever-armed ſeraphs each of them drew his flaming ſword, fixed his ſhield, and planted themſelves around the bed of the good *Stabilius*, every hero putting himſelf in a poſture of defence, ſaying with united voice, *It is the good will of our Lord that his choſen ones ſhould be preſerved.* Happy man, ſaid I, who art thus defended! I thought in my dream, that after all this was done, the good *Stabilius*, as if he had received freſh vigour at the arrival of his celeſtial viſitants, opened his mouth, and moſt fervently expreſſed himſelf in the following manner: I know that he is God, and that he is my God. He hath guided me from my conception to this my dying day; all his judgments towards me have been mingled with mercy, and holy and reverend is his name; all his mercies have been mixed leſs or more with judgment. I will therefore, with the royal Hebrew, ſing of mercy and of judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing. A chain of well-concerted and bleſſed providences laid hold of

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me at my conception, and till now hath led me in ſuch a manner, that all hath been for good; and now, my friends, it is with amazement I ſee both the ends of the chain unalterably fixed in the eternal throne. It cometh from and centereth in the Father's everlaſting love to me, in the perſon of Jeſus, unworthy as I am; and O! let God, even God in the perſon of the Redeemer, be praiſed, be owned and glorified with my laſt, my departing breath. Hear me, my fellow Chriſtians, for I ſpeak now within the immediate views of eternity, and DEATH even now oppreſſeth my weary lungs. Behold, *I go the way of all mankind; but I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and although after my ſkin worms deſtroy, as they certainly will, this body of mine, yet in the fleſh, even in this fleſh, now almoſt conſumed, I ſhall ſee God: yea I ſhall ſee him for myſelf, and not for another; not at a diſtance, but near, though my reins be conſumed within me. I ſhall ſee him on that momentous and much-deſired day on which I ſhall, in my whole perſon, be made like unto himſelf.* Theſe words were expreſſed even in the arms of DEATH, ſo that he

was quite spent with speaking, and lay in a profound silence for a minute or two; then in holy triumph, with a countenance that displayed a sense of conquest, he said, *Lord Jesus, come quickly; into thy hands I commend my spirit.* These were his last words, and a few minutes after he quietly yielded up the ghost, and slept in Jesus.

In the mean while *Veratio* addressed himself to me as follows: This, *Novitio*, is Christian fortitude, distinct from the ancient pagan bravery of the Romans. If you see a Brutus or Cassius, or even a Cato himself, out-brave the fears of DEATH, it is from ignorance of the real nature and state of an HEREAFTER: but it is the clear knowledge of eternity, and of the perfections of God, which fortifies the mind of *Strabilus* against every painful apprehension, now he is making his exit from the stage of time, and struggling hand to hand with the quencher of the animal flame.

Mind the tender *Honoria*; mark how she stands with a mournful pleasure by the bed of her dying partner, hers but a very few

moments longer. Two things oppreſs her with ſenſible concern, and two things inſpire her labouring boſom with holy joy. She is moſt ſenſible of the awful diſpenſation which lays her under a multiplicity of cares; and O! her dear, her much eſteemed *Stabilius*, the pain which he endures in his departing moments becomes hers by ſympathy. As ſhe ſupports his head, and tenderly wipes the cold ſweat from his brow, every ſigh of his, every ſymptom of pain, cuts its way directly through her ſympathetic heart; ſhe dreads the parting with him, yet longs for the diſſolving moment. Souls thus knit by holy matrimony, and thus made one by ſympathy, feel in parting ſuch rending and tearing of the ſenſitive faculties, as neither tongue nor pen can deſcribe. But in the midſt of her ſorrow two things ſupport the amiable *Honora*, namely the conſideration that theſe departing agonies put a period to every grief, a final period to every ſorrow of her dear, her much valued huſband. And ſhe hopes, upon ſolid and ſcriptural grounds ſhe hopes, that in a little time ſhe herſelf will be in mercy taken to the celeſtial world, where ſhe ſhall again receive with unſpeakable

joy the pure and ſpiritual careſſes of her glorified huſband, where they ſhall ſpend a vaſt and endleſs eternity together, in the tranſporting pleaſures of paradiſe, and mutually join in celebrating the praiſes of their common God and Saviour. Thus ſhe mourns, and reaſon ſays ſhe ſhould; but religion teaches her to mourn as one that is not without hope.

The diſſolving moment come the watchful infernals took wing and fled, leaving the ſoul for ever to the bleſſed poſſeſſion of uninterrupted peace; ſhe aſcended triumphant, and rapt in extatic wonder, ſat for a ſeaſon on the clayey lips of her beloved mate, gazing on the ſplendor of the meſſengers of heaven; notwithſtanding ſhe herſelf ſhone more glorioully than all her attendants; who, free from envy, joyfully ſaluted her with *Peace be unto thee*, and fondly congratulated her on her ſafe arrival on the confines of eternity.

By this time I thought I ſaw an innumerable company of ſeraphic *flames*, all of them ſhining in the perfection of glory, who as the former came at the will of

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Immanuel to congratulate the ſoul on her ſafe paſſage through the wilderneſs of tears, and the gloomy valley of the ſhadow of DEATH, and her ſafe arrival in Immanuel's country; then gave her their united welcome into their reſplendent ſociety. I cannot now, ah! I cannot deſcribe the joys of the glory-born ſoul, when ſhe firſt perceived herſelf inveſted with the radiance of heaven, and ſenſibly preſt to the fervent boſom of everlaſting love, for her admiration was inexpreſſible. But my benevolent guide, the good *Keratie*, now becoming an interpreter, with no ſmall difficulty I gathered up ſome few of her rapturous expreſſions, which, but for his aſſiſtance I could not have done; for ſhe ſpoke in the celeſtial tongue, which is a language that I never had learned; and ſo imperfect is the fragment which I collected when compared with the original, that I redden with ſhame, and my heart flutters with fear to expoſe it to view, leſt I ſhould thereby injure the ſubject, and eclipſe the glory which I would gladly (the Lord knows) recommend to human eſteem. But encouraged by the confeſſion of incomparable Paul, *here we ſee darkly, and but in*

part, I will venture to write it, though it is, as it were, with fear and trembling.

No sooner was the happy soul disentangled from mortality, but she was filled with the fulness of the glory of God, and in the highest elevation of transport, cried out with a voice of the most perfect melody.

Is this the resting-place, to which we weary pilgrims are brought after a moment's trouble below? Glorious rest! I have often heard, I have often longed for the possession of thee when tossed with the tempest of life! Happy! Blessed peace! Uninterrupted joy and permanent rest! Hallelujah! Let all the empyrean hosts, let all the militant church incessantly praise in the highest strain, the eternal and bounteous Provider of this glorious rest, in which all our labour and sorrow shall eternally cease! Is this the heaven I have so often heard preached? This glorious place! O heaven! How often have I heard of thy divine excellencies when sojourning in the world below? But now I behold thy refulgent glories without an interposing cloud, and lo! the thousandth part of thy

beauties was never diſcloſed. Happy are thine inhabitants, thou imperial city, for the great King is in the midſt of thee; his uncreated glories irradiate every corner of thy bliſsful ſtreets. Bleſt and unſullied manſions of the diſembodied ſpirits of the juſt! Happy I, who was predeſtinated to the poſſeſſion of this divine inheritance! Is this the Saviour whom I formerly denied? Ever, till the day of unfruſtrable grace, did I ſay unto thee, thou adorable Lord, I will not have *thee* to reign over me. And, O my Lord, am I now at laſt bleſt with the immediate viſion of thee? Thou Sharon roſe divine! Thy beauties, Lord, how amiable! O how tranſcendently great are thine excellent glories! Eternal and all-conquering Saviour, I am now at laſt ra-viſhed with thy ſuper-abundant goodneſs, which on earth I could ſcarcely with cool-neſs admire, but now I behold thee to be all excellent and divine. Is this the *crown*? The end of all my former croſſes? Maſſy treaſure! Glorious luſtre! How ſtriking is the ſtupendous blaze! In the world below my eyes were dreadfully obſcure, but now I behold all the excellencies of Godhead. All the radiant beams of unclouded divi-

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nity in their fullest resplendency shining forth in thine immaculate person thou adorable Jesus. Blessed thou! happy I! Blessed afflictions, which in thy all-powerful hand thou eternal Spirit, have fitted me for those unsullied mansions of uninterrupted felicity!

Sin and Death where are ye now? trampled for ever beneath my victorious feet. Adorable Saviour, the conquest is thine. Ye tempting fiends, the promised time is now come that I scorn for ever your envious rage. No more, ye malignant infernals, shall your cruel buffetings be able to shake the tranquility of this ever peaceful and glorified mind. Nor shall your spear-like tongues, ye sons of violence and deceit, evermore be able to tarnish my conduct with blame. Ye children of perfidy, ye treacherous persecutors of the gracious church, the gulph is fixed, and here you can never come a second time to perplex me with sorrow; nor shall the tumultuous rage of fiery lusts and impetuous passions ever more be able to separate betwixt my best beloved and me.

I AM now ſecure within thine inſurmountable walls, O thou bleſſed Jeruſalem! Overwhelmed with the inſupportable blaze of delighted divinity; here let me baſk for ever, though the bliſs is inſufferable. Already filled with the fulneſs of manifeſted and imparted love, let me drink for ever at the fountain of life. Ever, for ever, my God, will I praiſe thee; inceſſantly praiſe thee whilſt eternity endures. Grace and providence, providence and grace, ſhall fill up the meaſure of mine eternally delightful ſong. This is my employment; this is the talk preſcribed by the ſweet obligations of gratitude."

HAVING gathered up this moſt imperfect fragment of what I heard, I thought that the ſcene was drawn, and the viſion departed from me; and I, aſtoniſhed at what I had heard and ſeen, turned to my guide, and in tranſport ſaid; no wonder, ſir, if Balaam, who ſaw the viſions of the Almighty, deſired to die the death of the righteous, and enjoy ſuch a latter end as theirs. No wonder if Judas the traitor deſpaired and hanged himſelf, after having betrayed ſuch a glorious Saviour as this.

Ah, *Veratio*, my good *Veratio*, may I enjoy the divine favour whatever elſe I may lack! May I endure all ſorrow which both earth and hell can inflict, rather than miſs of the glory which ſhall be revealed! Fall ſhort of heaven! O! I tremble at the thought! Fall ſhort of heaven! If I ſhould, I ſhould be of all creatures the moſt emphatically wretched and miſerable. To love, to ſee, and not enjoy, ah what intolerable anguiſh would it give! If it depended leſs or more on works of my performing, I could not avoid falling ſhort. But it is of grace, all of grace, of nothing but grace, and ſo let grace have the glory for ever ſecure. Yet O let me not deceive myſelf in a matter of ſuch grand importance! but, raw and unexperienced as I am, I think I have ſomething of the ſame hope which the good *Stabilius* expreſſed; and O, *Veratio*, may my latter end be like his!

PART

PART VI.

HERE my guide addreſſed me, and ſaid, Now, *Novitio*, you have ſeen ſomething of DEATH transformed into life, and it is glorious in your eſteem; but if you will follow me, we may yet make farther diſcoveries relating to the departure of the ſanctified. By this time my curioſity was ſtretched to the utmoſt pitch, therefore I needed but little perſuaſion to attend to farther diſcoveries, ſeeing the departure of *Humilius* and *Stabilius* was ſo very agreeable, at leaſt to myſelf; therefore I ſaid to my guide, lead, *Veratio*, lead wherever you will, and I will follow you.

ARE you ſure of that? replied *Veratio*; perhaps you may be miſtaken; a much ſtronger perſon than *Novitio* appears to be hath deſerted me before now, and the ſtrongeſt have found it difficult enough to adhere to me at certain times. Pardon me,

ſir,

ſir, replied I, I meant whilſt you unfold ſuch agreeable ſcenes; for I perceive, ſir, their influence is attractive. Well, *Novitio*, replied he, I agree with you in that, for when you are ſtrongly drawn, I do not doubt but you will run apace. However at preſent let us attend to the matter in hand.

ACCORDINGLY he led me away from this to another, but mean apartment, and as we entered he ſaid, Now, *Novitio*, prepare yourſelf for ſeeing the wondrous works of the Almighty. I admired what miracle I was now to behold, but ere long I beheld a miracle of grace; a poor woman and three ſmall children were the humble inhabitants of this deſpicable hut: As I learned from my guide, the poor but tender mother, whoſe name was *Fidelia*, had been confined to her bed by a deathly diſorder for the ſpace of ſix weeks or upwards, and by this time ſhe ſeemed almoſt conquered by the fatal enemy to nature, though ſhe ſtill retained the perfect uſe of her reaſon, and ſtill was capable of ſpeaking to her viſitants. At the time of our going into her mean apartment, ſome few of her friendly

acquaintance,

acquaintance, some of them meanly, others of them better attired, were come to visit her, desirous to perform the best offices of Christian friendship, expecting that her departure from earth was at hand, one of them who stood by her bed-side spoke to her thus; my dear friend, *Fidelia*, I see your body is very low, and in all appearance the hour of your departure is approaching near; but if strength will permit, I should be glad to know how it is with you in your soul; for I have sometimes known the soul to be most healthful and vigorous, when the outward man has been in the very arms of DEATH! To whom I thought *Fidelia* replied; O my friend! we have a kind and compassionate Lord; his comforts to me, a poor unworthy creature, are neither few nor small. I may well say he feedeth me with his grace, and all his paths drop fatness to me. O my friends! my root is in the best soil, and the dew lies all night upon my branches. O let me ever be thankful for that sweet and transporting day on which I found freedom of soul to rely upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is held forth in the gospel! Blessed be God for freedom to call the Redeemer my own, and to look

up

up to him in an appropriating way! O the sweetness of the remembrance of it! It bears me down with the delightful weight of humbling love; electing, redeeming, and regenerating love commended itself by the sweetest and most persuasive eloquence unto my heart, and still it is the more endearing, because of its discriminating nature. O it is unspeakable! O the heights and depths! O divine love! Why is it that I, a poor unworthy hell deserving sinner, should be found thy favoured object? Amazing and miraculous grace! that ever the great salvation of the adorable Jesus hath laid hold on me, and preached itself into my very heart notwithstanding I am the basest of all the human creation. Behold I see the wise, the moral, the rich, and the noble, standing at a distance from the great salvation, and strangers to the pardoning mercy of God, whilst I, the most unworthy of all, am fed with the comforts of his love. It is thy doing, O thou omnipotent Saviour, and it is marvellous in my eyes! Thou lovest merely because thou wilt love, and pardonest only because it is thy pleasure so to do.

After some time her friend addressed himself to her as follows; I perceive, *Hadria*, and I am glad to see it, that you do not quarrel with the providence of God, because he hath given you but a scanty measure of worldly substance; you do not seem offended because you are poor, and have not fortunes to leave your children.

No, my friend, replied she, I am not angry, for the Lord doth all things well, and my lot hath been rightly and wisely determined; I would not on any account that it had been otherwise than it has been. Whatever beauty others may think there is in growing riches, I must tell you for my own part, that I would not for the world I had been born to be rich, for wherever they come, *riches are sure to be a burden to the possessor*; therefore, he who well understood the nature of things, says, *he that increaseth in them, doth also increase in sorrow.* I have always found my own corruptions to be burden enough for me to bear up the hill towards mount Zion, without a weight of thick clay, however brilliant, on my shoulders.

Here my guide gently jogged me, and said, This is most excellently judged of *Fidelia*, for as weights of lead are to the courser, when he runs for the plate, *so is gold to the follower of Christ*. It is very difficult to possess gold without loving of it, and you may know *that the love of money is the root of all evil*; insomuch that it is next to impossible for a rich man to be a true and humble Christian *.

In the mean while, *Fidelia* continued, and said, Had I been full, I might with many others have forgot my God; but my

* Within the few years that I have been a professor, I have known many useful members of gospel churches utterly spoiled by getting rich. From spiritual, savoury, and sociable brethren they have dwindled into meer formalists and muckworms, barren figgtrees in the garden of God, and such they are likely to continue till it is the pleasure of God to revive them again. Many you will find convinced of this doctrine in their judgment whose affections are altogether unmoved; therefore they compass sea and land to *get money*, notwithstanding they have the greatest reason to believe, that it will add to their trouble. Yea although they have many stings of conscience on this account, still they will do what they can to increase it. *How absurd is man?*

narrow

narrow circumſtances have furniſhed me with many precious opportunities of beholding the goodneſs of his providence and faithfulneſs to his promiſe; which opportunities I had certainly loſt had I been rich. I think I ſee ſuch beauty in the unerring diſpenſations of providence towards me, that no way ſo ſuitable could have been choſen, as the very way which my gracious God hath taken to bring me to himſelf and his glory. Well may I cry out with the apoſtle, *O the depth and riches both of his wiſdom and knowledge!*

FILLED with admiration at the goodneſs of God, *Fidelia* ſtopped here, and *Veratio* ſaid to me, It has been, *Novitio*, the error of many writers, and ſtill more of readers, to ſuppoſe, that ſmall entertainment, and but few profitable hints, are to be drawn from a ſtate of low life; but if we will make true religion our theme, where muſt we go to find it? If we enquire at the palace of his Grace *Elatus*, there we ſee all the pomp of magnificent pride driving on in its lofty career; or if we call at the ſeat of my Lord *Ganëo*, we are immediately confronted by drunkenneſs and revelling,

and

and the delicate board, though covered with the moſt taſteful viands, is altogether deſtitute of that religion which would prevent it becoming a ſnare to the owner. It is much more likely, that if in queſt of real religion you will rather find her with wretched Lazarus at the gate, than within the hotel of Dives; for not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many noble, are called to the poſſeſſion of true religion, but the poor have the goſpel preached to them; and amongſt the lower claſs of the people religion dwells in its greateſt power, as you may ſee in the caſe of *Fidelia*, whoſe mind is overwhelmed with holy joy, even in the midſt of her extreme ſufferings.

It was now, I thought, that one of her friends aſked her how it was with her, as to the comforts of life? To which ſhe replied, O my friends, I have all things and abound; our gracious God hath promiſed, that our bread ſhall be given and our water ſhall be ſure; and to the praiſe of his providence I can ſay, that I have always found the promiſe verified, for he is a God keeping covenant, and full of faithfulneſs; this I have always had reaſon to

note,

note, but more especially been sensible of it since the death of my dear *Fidelio*; since then I have been necessitated to live by faith on the promises of a provident God. I have been enabled to trust, and never knew the promises to fail, nor the Lord to fall short of any word he hath spoken. How shall I praise thee, thou God of infinite fulness, who from thine own inexhaustible stores hast richly supplied all my wants! I long to appear before thee, O thou immaculate Redeemer, that I may see thee in the effulgence of thy glory, for here I see darkly as in a glass. Many are the refreshing gales of sweet consolation which I have had in the ordinances of thy grace; but now, when I compare them with that unfathomable depth of undecaying comfort which I see immediately before me, they are like the small dust of the balance when compared to the world, or like to the drop of water which hangs at the bucket when compared to the vast ocean. O the divine blaze of heavenly glory, which already begins to beam upon my soul, even on this wilderness-side of Jordan! O thou new and heavenly Jerusalem, I am already overcome with thine excellent beauties! O what must it be when

put

put into full poſſeſſion! And, even now, nothing hinders me from feeding on the ſweeteſt of thy comforts, but this thin and almoſt rent vail of mortality. Let it once be rent, as it ſoon will, and I ſhall with unſpeakable joy ſuſtain all the ſtupendous blaze of thy unſullied glories.

I long. O! I long to join yonder glorious throng, yonder radiant church in the realms above. I long to preſs into yonder bright aſſembly which, by faith I ſee ſurrounding the eternal throne, that I might mingle my humble notes with their harmonious voices, and with them ſing the praiſe of God and of the Lamb. Haſten thy pace, O ever-tardy time! Ye moments ſwiftly end your deſtined flight. Lord, ſhake my glaſs, that the ſands may ſpeedily paſs through. But I ſee, holy and reverend is his name, that there remains but a few particles more in the life end of my glaſs, and they will ſpeedily be down, then face to face I ſhall ſee the glorious object of my ſupreme delight, and for ever offer up perfect adoration to him that loved me, and waſhed me in his blood. With unſpeakable delight I ſhall behold that glori-

ous

ous face which once was marred with *shame and spitting*. I shall behold him for myself, and not for another. These eyes, which have so often turned aside after vanity, these very eyes, shall in transport gaze on the King in his beauty; this tongue shall delight to praise him eternity along; and these hands, which once were the instruments of unrighteousness, shall cast at his majestic feet the glorious crown wherewith all this worthless head shall soon be adorned. O happy, happy day, that brings home the longing exile, and lands the weary pilgrim upon the shore of rest, to be ever, ever with the Lord!

FIDELIA finishing here, her friend again said to her, My dear sister, I rejoice with you that the Lord is pleased to indulge you with such a measure of his sensible presence, on this which otherwise would be a day of severe trial to you; but the Redeemer's presence makes even DEATH itself not only tolerable, but desirable and easy. But in the midst of your sensible enjoyments, you seem as if you had forgotten your three little children: tell me, *Fidelia*, have you no uneasiness at the thoughts of

leaving

leaving them behind you in a land of sin and sorrow? Would it not, with submission to the divine will, be desirable to you to be spared to see them brought up to a capacity of doing for themselves?

To whom *Fidelia* replied: The Lord hath been a husband to the widow, and I am persuaded he will be a father to the fatherless, and an all-sufficient stay to the helpless orphan. My children are dear, but my Saviour is infinitely dearer to me, and I have got such a taste of the grapes of the heavenly Canaan, that I cannot think of abiding on this wilderness-side of Death. My heart is already gone over, O why do I tarry any longer behind! but the Lord's time is the best. Pray for me, my friends, that I may not offend the best of beings by my impatience to be gone, but submissively wait for the dissolving moment. Then her friend tenderly rejoined: But have your companions in warfare no weight at all upon your mind? Can you with pleasure leave them in this inhospitable world? She replied: Alas! my friend, of what service can my presence be to a warfaring church? I can be of no use at all.

But

But I know that he who hath chosen, purchased, and sanctified it, will safely keep it, and every individual member of it, to the perfect day: for of all whom the Father hath given to the Mediator, he hath not lost, he will not lose any thing; no, not the weakest, or the most contemptible; for all shall be gathered safe to his heavenly kingdom. Give the immortal love of a dying woman to our fellow-church-members, and tell them from me, that it is the last request of their dying friend, that they live at a greater distance from the world. There is, alas! too much, by far too much likeness betwixt the precious children of God and the children of the world. Some of them, in a manner very unbecoming, court the fantastical honours, and others seem too eagerly to thirst after the perishing and unsatisfactory riches, of this transitory and delusive world, which, if they could obtain, would all *lose their beauty on a dying day*. O! a dying day gives us clear views of things, and exceedingly diminishes the value of gold and silver. Bid them, therefore, behold the profits and honours of this world with death-bed eyes, and then they will readily declare that *all is vanity*. And o-

there

thers of our friends there are, who but too, too much delight in the vain and empty pleasures of the flesh, which at best are no more than an aerial dream. But O! tell them from me, that the honours of life are lighter than chaff, and will all be driven away when Christ comes with his fan in his hand, thoroughly to purge his floor; then, my friends they will appear lighter than nothing, and altogether vanity. O that they could be perswaded that gold and silver is one of the most dangerous burdens that a Christian possibly can carry: the love of money is the root of all evil. They will never repent when they come to a death-bed, that they are not rich, and cannot leave fortunes for their children. Tell them, that if the almighty, in his wisdom, sees that riches are for their good, he will, in his benevolence, bestow them without their immoderate care, or without injuring their minds in the least. O let Christians beware of accounting gain to be godliness. Tell them from me, that the pursuit of worldly pleasure is the certain way to dishonour their God, and destroy the peace of their own souls. O perswade them, as Christians, to seek the things which come

from

from above, where the bleſſed Jeſus ſitteth at the right hand of God. Let them know, that conformity to the vain cuſtoms of the world is highly injurious to the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt, and has a natural tendency to harden poor ſinners in their rebellion againſt God. When they come to a death-bed, as I am now, all thoſe names of honour, the applauſe of mankind, and all the comfort which ſprings from the poſſeſſion of riches, will vaniſh away as empty vapours and ſmoke. Verily, all things here below are vanity. The divine religion of the ever-loving and ever-lovely Jeſus, is the one thing needful; the only thing that will yield ſatisfaction on a dying day.

FIDELIA having exhauſted her ſtrength, remained a conſiderable time ſilent, and *Veratio* turned himſelf toward me and ſaid.

Now *Novitio*, this is divine religion with a witneſs! Here are riches in the midſt of poverty; health in the midſt of ſickneſs; joy in the midſt of pain; and glory riſing

out of misery. What an exalted soul is this? How much of heaven is now let down into this blessed cottage? How glorious! How excellent is thy religion, O thou amiable Saviour of mankind? Blessed is he, the life of whose soul is the only begotten of the father!

KNOW, my friend, that *Fidelia* was daughter to a worthy tradesman named *Philalethes*, one who was a constant lover, and a punctual observer of truth, as all that dealt with him would readily testify. *Philalethes* was parent to a numerous offspring, whom he carefully instructed in the principles of religion. As soon as his tender infants began to lisp forth their innocent and child-like prattlings, he used to deal with them as rational creatures, and studied to impress their minds with a sense of the greatness and omnipresence of God; particularly of the purity of his nature, and his utter aversion to sin. It was his constant custom to maintain regularly at a certain hour twice a day the worship of God in his family, at which he took care that no business, however urgent, should

hinder the attendance of either children or ſervants, accounting it is honour, as he found it his pleaſure, to go before his family in the worſhip of their *maker*. And well knowing, that the Almighty delighteth more in the gates of Zion than in all the dwellings of Jacob, he carefully led his whole family duly to attend the public worſhip of God, during which he accuſtomed his children from their youngeſt years to a decent and becoming gravity in the houſe of prayer. He ſuffered no part of the holy ſabbath to be devoted to vain amuſement or worldly buſineſs, the morning thereof was chiefly employed in divine worſhip, and in putting his family in mind of the ſolemnity of the ſanctuary-ſervice which they were to enter upon; and in the evening his care was to improve the ſermons which they had heard, and adminiſter ſuitable inſtructions to the various branches of his family, according to their ſeveral capacities. He greatly confided in that word of promiſe, *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go and when he is old he will not depart from it.* Proverbs xxii. 6. And although he perfectly

knew that he could not give them grace, he believed it his duty to innure them to the form of religion. Encouraged by the promiſe, and well knowing that human endeavours avail but little without divine influence, he was a fervent wreſtler* with God for the bleſſing, and had the pleaſure of ſeeing that his endeavours and prayers were not in vain; as his family, even from their younger years, were properly reſtrained from the faſhionable vices which corrupt our youth, and were perfect ſtrangers to the brilliance of a ball, and the irreligious entertainment of a theatre. In the diſpoſal of his children in marriage he was not ſo careful about worldly advantages as he was ſtrictly nice in his enquiries, whether there was a likeneſs in their natural diſpoſition, the viſible appearance of real grace in the ſoul, and a harmony in their religious ſentiments; for he well knew that unleſs huſband and wife are of the ſame opinion, both with regard to doctrine and manner of worſhip, there is but little proſpect of that union which is ſo eſſential

* Gen. xxxii. 24.

to mutual happiness. *Fidelia* he married to a worthy young man of but a small fortune, whose name was *Fidelio*, a mechanical tradesman, who in their younger years sustained such losses in trade, as reduced him to the necessity of supporting his family by the labour of his hands; and no labour he thought too hard to support his wife and children whom he so tenderly loved. But as one says in a certain place, it sometimes happens to a righteous person according to the desert of the wicked; so it happened to *Fidelia*, for it pleased the Lord a few years since to take her husband away from her at a very short notice, to possess the heavenly diadem to which he was appointed. Her fervent and faithful friend, her diligent provider being gone, she found herself in a melancholy situation, left in an inhospitable world with three tender and beloved infants, one of whom was but just weaned from the breast. But her God, her faithful God, was the object of her trust. She sensibly felt the stroke, and was humbled under the afflicting dispensation; but never, never was the grieved *Fidelia* heard

to alledge, that the almighty Diſpoſer dealt hardly with her. Never was ſhe known in a way of murmuring and impatience to ſay unto God, *What doſt thou?*

On the other hand, ſhe was careful to know whether ſhe had not purchaſed the affliction to herſelf by an over-eſteem for, and too much dependence on her huſband; thereby with-holding a part of her heart from, and infringing her duty of full dependence on God. In the times of her deepeſt diſtreſs ſhe was wont thus to reaſon: I know, yea I am fully perſuaded, that the Lord afflicteth not willingly; there muſt be neceſſity for it ere he is pleaſed to apply the rod. Inſtead of mourning as one without hope, her principal care was, that the diſpenſation might be ſanctified to her advantage and growth in grace, that ſhe might live more upon, and reſt more fully in the Saviour who died for her. *Fidelia* was a woman who knew well how to plead a promiſe in the time of need; ſhe was always but weak in body, but a powerful wreſtler at the throne of grace;

ſhe

ſhe was ſly in courting, and modeſt in receiving favours from man, but at the throne of God ſhe was importunate and would not take a denial. Her circumſtances being very low after the death of her huſband, ſhe was brought to the neceſſity of living by faith in a promiſing God, even for hers and her childrens daily ſuſtenance, which I aſſure you is far from being the eaſieſt part of the exerciſe of faith.

DISTREST *Fidelia* uſed to comfort herſelf in reflecting upon the regard which Jehovah has expreſſed towards the poor and needy, and eſpecially his declaring himſelf "to be a huſband to the widow, a father to the fatherleſs, and a ſtay to the helpleſs orphan;" and thus ſhe was wont to reflect within herſelf, "The glorious God, who hath ſeen it meet to take away my huſband, hath graciouſly promiſed to be a huſband to me himſelf; and if he will be my huſband, as he hath ſaid, he will ſurely act the part of the beſt of huſbands. The huſband's part is to direct, defend, and provide for his ſpouſe, and

and all this the Lord hath promised he will do for the widow who trusts in him. This is agreeable to the tenor of the promises in general, and in particular to that salutary word on which he has caused me to hope, where he hath declared himself a *sun* and a *shield* to his people. Here is *light* to lead and direct, here is *heat* to influence and quicken me in all my languor, and here is a *shield* for safety, a *shield* of protection from all enemies, outward and inward; he addeth, I will give *grace* to support under, and to sanctify afflictions; and, when the work is finished, he says, I will give *glory*. This life is indeed a life of infinite wants, but here is provision made for them all; for it is added, *I will withhold no good thing*. This is an ample provision made for all my necessities. Great as they are, the grace of the promise is infinitely greater. Here is consolatory supply for the most desolate widow. I will therefore trust in the Lord, and not be afraid; and, so trusting, I shall never be confounded, nor shall my hope be put to shame. This is the ground of all my confidence, he encourages the boldness

neſs of the weak, the poor and needy; but abhors the timidity of the unbelieving. None are ever condemned for truſting in the Lord with a holy boldneſs, in proportion to their neceſſities; my neceſſities are great, therefore, O Lord, may my truſt in Thee be ſtrong."—It was thus ſhe was wont to commune with her own heart in profitable reflections upon the promiſes of God. She was likewiſe accuſtomed early to tell her children, that now they had no natural father to provide for and diſpoſe of them; but that God had declared himſelf *the Father of the fatherleſs*, and ſhe hoped that He would be a father to them. Earneſtly did ſhe recommend them to the grace and protection of the divine Shepherd, who bears the lambs on his arm, and nouriſheth them in his boſom. She prayed, and ſhe hoped that God would be the guardian of their infant years, train them up in his own fear, nurture, and admonition, provide for them things neceſſary, and diſpoſe of them to the glory both of his providence and grace. Thus her daily prayers were unto the Lord, and to him were all her *cares* com-

committed; nothing doubting, but in the unbounded beneficence of his nature he would take ſpecial care both of her and her's.

She lived in a conſtant reliance on the providence and promiſes of God, and was never diſappointed, notwithſtanding her faith was frequently tried as with fire; and now ſhe is a dying, could I paint to you the holy joys of her elevated ſoul, if you were poſſeſt of all the wealth of the Indies, *Novitia*, you would willingly part with it, if it were poſſible that you ſhould exchange your condition for ſuch as her's. An explicit narration of *Fidelia*'s experience would be of more uſe to the church of Chriſt, than the voluminous elaborate works of many a learned doctor, who had not had the ſame experience; for there hath been more religion in one week of her life, than in thirty years preaching of ſome who are called maſters in Iſrael. And now, *Novitia*, that you may know that God is not aſhamed of the meaneſt of his ſaints, I have a mind once more to give you a view of the immaterial world; thereby

thereby you will ſee that the angels of God do not deſpiſe her becauſe of her poverty.

THIS ſaid, he again in his uſual manner ſo ſtrengthened my viſual ray, that inſtantly I ſaw the place was filled with the heavenly hoſts, who unweariedly miniſtred to the dying woman; and ſhe, notwithſtanding in the embraces of DEATH, was ſo tranſported with holy joy, that ſhe forgot the pains of dying. So fervently glowed the ſeraphic flame in her heart, and in ſuch profuſion the joys of approaching eternity were poured into her ſoul, that all ſenſation of pain ſeemed to be gone. By this time the lamp of nature only glimmered in the ſocket; ſhe lay ſupinely ſtretched on her bed, longing and waiting for the diſſolving moment; and ſo long as her voice continued articulate ſhe diſpenſed inſtructions to her friends, adoring the riches of electing, redeeming, and regenerating love. At laſt, perceiving that nature's ſparks were almoſt extinguiſhed, with eyes ſublimely elevated, and holy triumph ſmiling on her countenance, with a

voice

voice which could ſcarcely be heard, ſhe ſaid, 'Come, Father, come; Thou knoweſt I am waiting thy command.' Theſe were her laſt words, and in a few moments after ſhe quietly departed, and her glorified ſoul joined in fellowſhip with the miniſters of heaven, formerly her inviſible attendants. Now, ſwift as thought, they carried her to the bliſsful regions of eternal day: where ſhe was received with joyful acclamations by all the hoſts of the heaven of heavens; and the ever-adorable Redeemer pronounced her bleſſed, ſaying, "Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, therefore thou ſhalt be ruler over many." On which I thought a crown of righteouſneſs was put upon her head by the pierced hand of the Redeemer; a palm of triumph given to her, and orders iſſued to put her in poſſeſſion of one of the manſions near the jaſper throne; where ſhe ſtrove to out-do Magdalene in praiſe, and to exalt her voice even above that of Mary the mother of our Lord. Here was emulation without anger, the moſt earneſt con-

contention without any tincture of pride. Who should be least in their own esteem; who should most glorify and exalt sovereignly free and distinguishing grace, were the springs of all their heavenly debates. Here Manasseh vied with the sweet singer of Israel, the man after God's own heart; the crucified Thief with Enoch and Abraham; Ruth the Moabitess with Deborah, a mother of Israel; Jairus, the jailor, contended with Paul the apostle; and babes from the womb claimed right to sing louder than Solomon the wisest of men. Here parents strove to surpass their children, and children to exceed the praises of their parents; masters their former servants, and servants their masters; ministers their people, and people their ministers; and every one urged his claim by rational and consistent arguments. As I was listening to the sweet contention, and gazing on the unutterable glories of the heavenly world, my beloved sleep departed, the unwelcome morning rushed in upon me, and bereaved me of the precious delights I had enjoyed in the night. So I awoke to disappointment and sorrow, finding myself still in the tents of Kedar, possessed

as heretofore of that unclean nature whence every evil to me proceeds, and ſtill to go burdened and groaning becauſe of a body of Death whilſt in this tabernacle. Yea, after all, perhaps to be tired of this world, and yet afraid to venture into another.

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TO THE

Rev. Dr. PRIESTLEY,

Of LEEDS, in Yorkshire.

In which is shewn,

I. That the Charges brought by him against the Orthodox, are applicable to none but People of the Doctor's own Perſuaſion.

II. That, notwithſtanding his endeavours to deſtroy the Doctrines of Chriſt's Divinity, and the vicarious Puniſhment of Sin; the Doctor has eſtabliſhed both, even to a Demonſtration.

III. That what the Doctor calls Rational-Religion, has, according to his own Account, been productive of the moſt unhappy and irrational Conſequences.

IV. That the Doctor's religious Pamphlets are a full and compleat Refutation of themſelves.

By the AUTHOR of

THE SHAVER's SERMON,

AND THE

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